AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL ETHICS

THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE IN A DEMOCRACY

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AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL ETHICS

PART I

HISTORICAL AND INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY

§ 1. The Meaning of Democracy

The fundamental problem of human life is the social problem or the problem of living together in a social order with the least friction and the richest possible conservation and development of human powers. Democracy is but the last and, we are more and more convinced, the best solution of the social problem. Democracy, therefore, whatever it may mean, is not ultimate; it is a means to an end. It is merely one of the many solutions that have been proposed for the fundamental problem of civilization. Democracy is true, then, not because it reflects the eternal order of things but because of its practical results. Of governments as well as of religious beliefs it may be said "By their fruits ye shall know them".

Democracy being an attempt to solve a comprehensive problem will of course present many phases. Looked at from the point of view of the state, democracy may be defined as the vesting of the people with the sovereign power. The supreme advantage of popular rule is that through it freedom and responsibility, rights and duties, are most intimately related. The exercise of sovereignty emphasizes the obligations that accompany it. Men are made to feel that rights and duties are but different ways of viewing the same social situation.

The relation of rights and duties suggests, however, that political democracy can never exhaust the meaning of

the term. For it is evident that there is something more fundamental than popular sovereignty. Plato long since pointed out in his Republic, the political Bible of western civilization, that justice is the supreme test we must apply to the solution of the social problem. Equity, therefore, is more fundamental to democracy than popular sovereignty. We stress the rule of the people because of our faith in it as an instrument for securing equality. DeTocqueville in his penetrating study of the third decade of the last century found the notion of equality fundamental in our conception of democracy. So enamored are Americans of equality, said he, that they would rather be equal in slavery than unequal in freedom. The egalitarianism of Jacksonian democracy is still much in evidence. We constantly exalt it above the much more plastic and spiritual idea of freedom. The average American is inclined to look upon equality as ultimate and final. It is preached as the goal of democratic strivings. The test of institutions is seen in the extent to which they assure equality. Men are not critical enough to inquire whether this equality is real or artificial, whether it is the absolute end or whether it is merely an instrument for the attainment of something else.

In reality equality is not ultimate even in a democracy. It will always remain more or less a fiction. Nature and heredity have weighted the scales against it. At best, equality is a social program for the control and utilization of the inequalities that are inevitable and even necessary to a progressive society. For progress demands inequality as well as equality. A progressive civilization, such as that of Periclean Athens, combines brilliant variations with wise social institutions for the utilization of talent in the interest of all. By insisting upon equality of opportunity we make it possible to select for positions of power and leadership those who are possessed of real ability. This ability is then utilized by society in the elevation of human life to a higher level where the principle of equality may again be applied in the interest of further advancement. The utmost that can be said for equality is that it is a means by which we regulate inequality.

It should always be borne in mind, however, that inequality is fundamental and it is doubtless well that it is so.

Within the last few decades men are coming to feel that neither popular sovereignty nor freedom and equality exhaust the notion of democracy. The term has taken on a much more subtle and spiritual connotation. Deeper than the notion of popular rule or of equality is that of fraternity, of spiritual and moral like-mindedness. It is this community of sentiment alone that vitalizes the struggle for justice and assures an intelligent and sympathetic exercise of popular sovereignty. Without it Demos can be as cruel and as arbitrary as the most absolute despot. The only rational justification for referring matters of highest import to the popular will is the existence of a common body of sentiment that is always the court of last appeal in a democracy. One great gain that comes through the exercise of popular sovereignty in fact is that the sheer exercise of this responsibility organizes the sentiments of men in terms of communal welfare. This body of sentiment, to be sure, does not deal primarily with matters of technical import. It centers around comprehensive norms, universal values, that concern the group as a whole.

The efficiency of democratic rule depends in the last analysis upon whether this body of sentiment is thoroughly organized and self-conscious. In so far as these conditions are met we can speak of a *social conscience* or a body of authoritative moral sentiment that always speaks the last word on paramount issues. The task of democracy, therefore, is primarily the task of the organization, the enlightenment and the efficient application of this body of sentiment to the fundamental social problem of living together successfully in society. For the accomplishment of this supreme purpose popular rule, equality and freedom are made use of but merely as instruments. Democracy is in its last analysis a mental attitude, a question of the organization of the sentiments of men and women. Democracy " founds the common good upon the common will, in forming which it bids every grown-up, intelligent person to take a part ".

§ 2. Democracy and the Average Man

The foregoing discussion suggests that the problem of a democracy is the problem of the average man. For the organization of moral sentiment in the intelligent and effective fashion demanded in a progressive community is ultimately a question of the training and discipline of the average man. But first we must make clear what is meant by the average man. The term has been criticized as misleading.

There is a general principle in the distribution of social strata, according to which we have at the higher levels a small group composed of genius and talent, the elements that make for leadership in every community. At the lower levels are found the proletariat, the unskilled, the illiterate, and, lowest of all, the defective and criminal. Midway between these lie the masses which compose the rank and file of society.

In a democracy it is this numerically dominant mediocrity that controls the situation. The typical representative of this segment is the average man, who is in reality a mythical personage. But in the actual working out of democratic institutions countless temperamental, social, economic, political, or cultural differences are ignored or eliminated so that the average man becomes tremendously real. He becomes real through the sheer weight of numbers and the "steam-roller" effect of the unwritten law of democracy, namely, uniformity. It is this democratic abstraction which utters the last word in the eternal argument. It gives us our measures of values from which there is no appeal. Like the golden calf of apostate Israel the average man is but the creation of our own hands and yet we worship him as our god.

The importance of the average man lies not alone in the sheer fact of his numbers or in the final and authoritative character of his pronouncements. It is the average man who is affected first and most fundamentally by any wide-reaching modifications of the social process. For the average man, as opposed to the selected and highly institutionalized members of the community, is most exposed to forces that make for social

changes. Where taxes are increased, health regulations altered, educational requirements modified, or any changes made in municipal or civic life, it is always the average man upon whom the disciplinary effect of the new experience first registers itself. To be sure, the average man as a rule tends to resist these changes. Habit and inertia dominate his life for the most part. Changes in his thought and conduct come through the sheer pull and haul of social pressure and the need for readjustments. But for the very reason that the need for readjustments is felt by the average man first and because this need affects his daily round most fundamentally, his reactions take precedence over everything else.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in history the great social upheavals have come from the masses rather than from the intellectuals or the propertied classes. This is illustrated in the France of Rousseau and in modern Russia. For in the last analysis it is the shaping of the sensibilities of the common man through the disciplinary effect of the social machinery that determines national policies. No movement, whether social or political, can hope for success that is not in harmony with this drift of sentiment as registered in the experiences of the average man. Public sentiment is very often mysterious, obscure, and only dimly self-conscious. It is a composite of countless individual reactions to social situations that vary infinitely in detail. It will be all the more abortive and irrational among a people such as those of Russia where the masses are illiterate, where effective political and social institutions for expressing the social will are lacking and where, consequently, there is little habituation to free democratic traditions. It will be more effective and self-conscious in a people such as the English, schooled for centuries to think and act under liberal institutions.

It is possible, therefore, to mold the sentiments of the average man in two ways. A despotic government may seek to shape this body of sentiments and control it as a means for the perpetuation of a dynastic establishment. Prussian statecraft offers us an illustration of the skilful manipulation of the senti-

ments of the average man, in the interest of dynastic ambitions, that is without a parallel in all history. Fixed hereditary class distinctions, military discipline together with a beaurocratic surveillance of the average man's thought and life through education and countless social regulations of a paternalistic order have held the loyalties of the German people to outworn feudalistic ideals. The world and the German people themselves are paying the bitter penalty for their docile, not to say servile, attitude toward their rulers. The unpardonable sin of the German beaurocracy lies in the fact that they stultified and betrayed the highest and holiest loyalties of a people. They artfully blinded the eyes of a nation as to its destiny.

A democracy follows a policy that is just the reverse of that pursued by a dynastic establishment. Among a free people the rôle of the ruler is merely to interpret and so far as possible to secure effective realization of the drift of sentiment registered in the experience of the average man. A despotic government assures for itself stability by controlling the sentiments of the average man in the interest of a select group. A democracy secures political and national permanence by vesting the ultimate responsibility for national action in the average man. In the one case the national structure is precariously balanced upon its apex. In the other it rests upon the broad foundations of the enlightened sentiments of the masses. In a despotic state the average man barters away his freedom for efficiency, economy of national resources, the comfort and security of a paternalistic régime, and for national prestige and power. In a democracy he enjoys the disciplinary effect of real freedom and responsibility but often at the price of wastefulness, inefficiency, and political corruption. For the citizen living under free institutions there is no " moral holiday."

§ 3. The Characteristics of the Average Man

The characteristics of the average man in a democracy are thoroughly familiar to us. He is dominated by routine and tradition. His philosophy of life consists for the most part

of conventional principles that are provided by pulpit, party, or counting-house. On the whole he is suspicious of ideas, especially if they be new; thinking is irksome and largely unnecessary since he finds that a judicious regard for what " they say " will solve most of his problems. The political " spell-binder " and the professional reformer, to whose interest it is to study his idiosyncrasies, find that a skilful appeal to his prejudices or to his fixed ideas never fails to bring a favorable response. On the whole, he prefers orthodoxy to scholarship in his minister, loyalty to party rather than political wisdom in his statesmen, the preservation of the profitable *status quo* in his business rather than the sacrifices necessary for the social or economic betterment of the community. Though our political overlord he is too often, in Mr. H. G. Wells' phrase, " state-blind ". On the other hand, the average man is not without redeeming qualities. If it be true that he is shallow and prejudiced these failings are more than offset perhaps by the homely but socially valuable virtues of honesty, patriotism, and sympathy. If he cannot be depended upon to start a reform, still less is he inclined to become a criminal. His simple and unsophisticated existence places at the disposal of the nation a mass of thoroughly sane and human sentiments to which we can safely appeal in great crises.

It is for the average man that our democratic institutions exist; they are supposed to be most nearly ideal in fact when they best reflect his view of life. In literature, art, morals, and religion he is the final arbiter; hence the questionable exploitation of elemental human instincts in the photo-play, the glorification of obscurantism in the pulpit, the tawdry and commonplace sentimentality of the cheap novel, the impossible wit of the pink Sunday supplement, the utterly inane songs of the popular vaudeville. No Oriental despot ever exercised a tithe of his sway for he rules the minds, not the bodies, of men, and there is no appeal from his arbitrament. The choicest products of literary or plastic art await his sovereign decision for the right to live. Preacher, politician, advertiser, teacher, philosopher, study to know and do his will. He is the incarnation of

modern humanity. The salvation of society is ultimately the salvation of the average man.

> "Deep in the breast of the Average Man,
> The passions of ages are swirled,
> And the loves and the hates of the Average Man
> Are old as the heart of the world—
> For the thought of the race as we live and we die
> Is in keeping the Man and the Average high."

Though ostensibly the stalwart champion of intellectual freedom the average man is often intolerant of new ideas. Free speech is, to be sure, a conventional part of democratic traditions. One is free, for example, to criticize the private life of a political candidate, even to the extent of circulating downright scandals. The average minister in orthodox Protestantism is not free to tell his congregation the bare facts of Old Testament history as they have been established by the critics. The average man may perhaps be able to stretch his conception of tolerance to the extent of listening to arguments against immortality or woman's rights but the like free speech in regard to the monogamous family, birth-control, the rights of private property, protective tariff, trade unions, or the "color line", depending upon the section concerned, may precipitate a torrent of disapproval and intolerant abuse.

Intellectual freedom seems to suffer from certain disabilities which are inseparable from democracy itself. DeToqueville contends that a democracy encourages superficial thinking in that the individual citizen must constantly pronounce upon the profoundest social, economic, or political questions in the exercise of his sovereign right as a member of a democracy. He inevitably falls into the habit of thinking in ready-made generalities. This amounts to a surrender of intellectual independence. Furthermore, the average man is made uneasy by new ideas. They suggest possible disconcerting changes in the social order; he has neither the time nor the ability perhaps to think things through for himself and prefers rather to bear those ills he has than fly to others he knows not of. Hence, it may be seriously doubted whether on great national issues

the average man ever earnestly seeks an intelligent comprehension of the principles concerned. For this reason his judgment on questions involving technical knowledge is often a hindrance to social efficiency; on a plain moral issue his opinion is invaluable.

Again, the average man is hampered by the narrow margin that is always found between thought and action in the shifting, uncertain conditions of American democracy. We have few or no social habits or traditions that encourage the life of reflection. The average American, especially in the great industrial centers, is catapulted from the cradle to the grave in the mad hurly-burly of a headlong civilization that never pauses to get its bearings or to ask the meaning of life. Having neither the time nor the inclination to think, the average man is repelled by reflection. To him every thinker is a potential rebel, a possible disturber of the peace. Since reflection alone gives to men a grasp of values and a sense of perspective it is not surprising that the average man who possesses neither is lacking in poise. He is the unhappy puppet of an imperious and eternal *now*. Imagination alone can emancipate us from the tyranny of the present, from the crushing, maddening immediacy of brute facts.

The anti-intellectualism of the average man also appears in his "state-blindness". Tyrannies even when intelligent are objectionable. But the most intolerable of all tyrannies is that based upon ignorance and callous indifference. "State-blindness" is congenital in American democracy. From the days of the revolutionary fathers to the present the average American has accepted state authority only under protest. He began by throwing off the yoke of despotism and unfortunately he has always associated political authority with that memorable struggle. Politics for the average American to-day is merely a necessary evil. The actual machinery of the state, political leaders, parties, platforms, party slogans, interest him very little; more often they arouse feelings of disgust or ridicule. True he is patriotic. But the state that elicits his patriotism is a hazy idealistic entity that bears about the same relation to

actual politics that the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount does to the " rules of the game " in business. These shadowy ideals find expression at Fourth of July celebrations or are evoked by the name of Lincoln or the sight of the flag. Seldom do they provide moral dynamic in dealing with the problems of the immediate political situation.

The average American prides himself upon his energy, his business astuteness, his industrial efficiency, but in many ways his civic stupidity makes the world stand aghast. He cannot see that the corrupt party leader whom year after year he returns to office is not only a bad investment from the standpoint of political efficiency but is also a degrading influence upon the moral sense of the entire community. He cannot see that by supinely submitting while unscrupulous individuals exploit the city's franchises he is cheapening the moral self-respect of the citizenship and rendering the economic struggle more difficult for all, including himself. He cannot see that an indispensable background for a noble and worthy citizenship is clean streets, efficient public service, honest officials, and a sensitive community conscience. For without these there can be no such thing as civic pride and without civic pride no man can do his best work, whether he be an artist or a hod-carrier. A Michael Angelo without Florence or a Phidias without Athens would have been unthinkable. The hard and cruel alternative, " work or starve ", which our militant industrialism offers the toiler, is tragic in its short-sighted selfishness. It forgets that the best worker must love his work and that this is impossible without a sense of social worth.

§ 4. Demos, the Modern Tyrant

The pivotal position occupied by the average man in the moral economy of a democracy was early recognized by DeTocqueville. But he saw in that fact a most serious handicap to moral and intellectual progress. He thought that he saw in the American democracy of the third decade of the last century the suggestions of a despotism more dangerous to the welfare of man than any the world had ever known. It was a

despotism, he tells us, not of the body but of the mind. The instruments of ancient tyrants were the thumbscrew, and the faggot, fetters, and headsmen. But they attacked the body only and were unable to subdue the spirit. Demos, the modern tyrant, extends to his victim physical freedom while seeking to enslave his soul. Death was the penalty for revolt against ancient forms of tyranny. To the modern rebel Demos says, "You are free to think differently from me and retain your life, your property, and all that you possess. But if such be your course you must be content to live the life of an alien and outcast among your own people. Civil rights to be sure are yours, in name at least, but they will lack that sympathy and sanction of your fellows without which they are otiose privileges. Honors and emoluments you may indeed seek at the hands of your fellow citizens but they will most assuredly be denied you since you have dared to set your feeble will in opposition to theirs. Physical life is yours but it is not incompatible with spiritual annihilation at the hands of the community." The social, political, or religious assassinations daily witnessed under free democratic rule are none the less tragic because they are bloodless.

DeTocqueville's observations were based upon the American democracy of the early part of the last century. At best it was but a shadow democracy, "the substance of things hoped for," for it still tolerated slavery. Yet with all its crudeness and inconsistency American democracy had already become self-conscious, intolerant and even tyrannical. "The smallest reproach," writes DeTocqueville, "irritates its sensibility, and the slightest joke that has any foundation in truth renders it indignant; from the style of its language to the more solid virtues of its character everything must be made the subject of encomium. No writer, whatever be his eminence, can escape from this tribute of adulation to his fellow-citizens. The majority lives in the perpetual practice of self-applause, and there are certain truths which the Americans can only learn from strangers or from experience."

Almost a century later another Frenchman gave us a

brilliant criticism of democracy that has much in common with the animadversions of DeTocqueville. Mr. Faguet of the French Academy insists that a democracy, because it vests its court of last appeal in the average man, places a premium upon both intellectual and moral incompetence. " The people favors incompetence, not only because it is no judge of intellectual competence and because it looks on moral competence from a wrong point of view, but because it desires before everything, as indeed is very natural, that its representatives should resemble itself." [1]

There are, thinks Faguet, two reasons for this attitude. In the first place, it is thoroughly human that the average man, schooled by democratic institutions to think that his will is ultimate law, should wish to see reproduced in his representatives his sentiments and prejudices. The average man, therefore, instinctively chooses men with education, mental attitudes and manners similar to his own. In the second place, moral progress is hindered by a vicious interpretation of the great democratic principle of equality. The average man tends " to exclude the competent precisely because they are competent, or if the phrase pleases better and as the popular advocate would put it, not because they are competent but because they are unequal, or as he would probably go on to say, if he wished to excuse such action, not because they are unequal, but because being unequal they are suspected of being opponents of equality ".

This militates against moral progress in two ways. It places a premium upon herd morality with its glorification of mere conventional goodness besides condemning the moral experience of men to a vicious circle that makes progress impossible. Of course such a measure of moral values automatically eliminates the expert who to-day must lead the way to the solution of our problems. The only sort of specialist who thrives under such a régime is the professional politician whom Faguet characterizes as " a man who, in respect of his personal opinions, is a nullity, in respect of education, a medi-

[1] *The Cult of Incompetence*, p. 29.

ocrity, he shares the general sentiments and passions of the crowd, his sole occupation is politics, and if that career were closed to him, would die of starvation". Such, in brief, is the statement of the case by Faguet to show that there are elements in democracy inherently opposed to moral progress.

That the average member of a democratic order should be inclined to magnify the conventional moral excellencies common to the masses is, as Faguet says, entirely natural. It is but another form of the fundamental impulse to group self-preservation. There is, after all, no other way for democracy to secure that continuity of tradition that will insure its persistence.

It is inevitable, furthermore, that democracy should exhibit the defects of its qualities. This is all the more to be expected in view of the fact that democracy is still in the tentative and experimental stage. If it be true, as Montesquieu suggests, that governments err quite as frequently through the over-emphasis of the principles for which they stand as through the neglect of them, it may very well be that there is such a thing as defeating democracy through overmuch democracy. Certainly it is true that the over-democratization of the conventional ideals of goodness represented by the average man will tend to defeat the ends of democracy. This is a matter of such importance that it demands a more detailed analysis.

§ 5. The Fallacy of Mere Goodness

Democracies are especially prone to magnify conventional goodness. "Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever," comes nearer than we are aware to expressing the ethical ideal of the average American or Englishman. This is strikingly illustrated in the masterpieces of English literature. If we call the roll of Shakespeare's characters, we find the great sinners, Iago, Richard, Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, Goneril, keenly intellectual, while Bassanio, Lear, Ophelia, Juliet, Desdemona, and Miranda, the heroes and heroines, must be content with mere goodness. It is not different with the novel. In Dickens inevitably the meed of intellect goes to Quilp, Tulkinghorn, or

Uriah Heep, while Dick Swiveller, David Copperfield, and Mr. Pickwick exude honest, unenlightened goodness. It has been said that "Milton makes his Satan so thoughtful, so persistent and liberty-loving, so magnanimous, and God so illogical, so heartless and repressive, that many perfectly moral readers fear lest Milton, like the modern novelists, may have known good and evil, but could not tell them apart".[1]

We are not concerned here to trace this curious idiosyncrasy of Anglo-Saxon ethics to its roots in national psychology. It may very well be, as often asserted, that the stern struggle of our ancestors with an inhospitable climate has tended to emphasize will and character rather than intelligence, though it is difficult to see why. Montesquieu was doubtless nearer right when he asserted that the discipline of a popular government tends to place a premium upon virtue in the sense of conventionalized democratic moral excellence. What interests us more is the vicious reasoning that underlies this fallacy of mere goodness. Professor Erskine has well stated it. "Here is the causal assumption that a choice must be made between goodness and intelligence; that stupidity is first cousin to moral conduct, and cleverness the first step into mischief; that reason and God are not on good terms with each other; that the mind and the heart are rival buckets in the well of truth, inexorably balanced—full mind, starved heart—stout heart, weak head." Science is doing much to deliver us from the fallacy of mere goodness. Most of us now no longer insist that the dentist who extracts an aching tooth shall be a saint.

It has been said, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die". Why this willingness to die for the good man? The answer is found in the relation of the good man to the conventional moral sentiment embodied in the social conscience. The good man is the moral beau ideal of his generation and age. It goes without saying that good men for whom the world is willing to die vary immensely from age to age. The

[1] Erskine, "The Moral Obligation to be Intelligent," *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XII, p. 175.

good man in every case, however, is one who in his character embodies to the highest degree those types of sentiment that are deemed praiseworthy. In other words, the enthusiasm for the good man is merely the enthusiasm for the most concrete embodiment of those things that an age esteems supremely worth while. To die for the good man is in a certain sense to die for the eternal and universal human values as a given age interprets them. In sacrificing oneself for him we are in reality sacrificing ourselves for the best there is in the race.

This enthusiasm, however, is often difficult to harmonize with the critical point of view. When dealing with universal emotional loyalties, with deeply implanted mental attitudes, we often find that they defy reason. Their very universality is confusing. We are like the mariner adrift without compass or landmark on the bosom of the Gulf Stream. This enthusiasm functions in an atmosphere that is so comprehensive and subtle that we cannot free ourselves from it. We are unable to set ourselves over against it as we must do in the critical exercise of the intellect. The situation is similar to that of the man of the middle ages with his uncritical enthusiasm for holiness. It incapacitated him for passing a trustworthy judgment upon the character of the saint and his acts, as is illustrated in the story of Saint Crispin stealing shoes for the poor. How often do movements for reform shipwreck against this pervasive, conventional, and uncritical ideal of the good man? The city " boss " who judiciously distributes fat turkeys among the poor of his precinct and manages to intermingle genuine sympathy with his acts of kindness, is shrewdly enlisting in his behalf the conventional moral sentiments of the average man. Against this no amount of moral harangues or abstract appeals to civic righteousness on the part of the reformer can ever avail. " Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."

This worship of conventional goodness is primarily responsible for the mistake of confusing the enthusiasm of the political, religious, or moral reformer with the moral excellence of

his own character or of the cause he represents. The passionate eulogy of Lincoln by the political leader is often but a clever way of convincing the hearer of the essential similarity between the orator's own character and the principles of his party with the character and ideals of the great emancipator. This sort of moral camouflage is made all the easier because for the average American ideals of social justice or of political righteousness float in an opalescent and ill-defined sea of uncritical enthusiasms and glittering generalities. We are not accustomed to associate our moral enthusiasms with concrete political problems and situations. The very remoteness of habitual loyalties of the higher sort, therefore, makes it all the easier to play upon them in the interest of unrighteous or doubtful causes.

We must seek the explanation of the force of conventional goodness in the "sets" of the emotional life of the average man. The logic of the emotions is very simple and unequivocal. Every emotion or sentiment is its own justification. It insists that whatever is is right. For it is a familiar fact that powerful and highly organized systems of sentiments tend to create their own measure of values, their own virtues and vices. So long as fixed traditional systems of sentiment are permitted to flourish without let or hindrance in the social conscience of a community real moral progress is impossible. The self-preservative impulses of these systems will insure the persistence of conventional and artificial moral values that do not connect in any vital fashion with the needs of society. Men are prone to identify truth or moral worth with the satisfaction of habitual ways of feeling and thinking. Hence, in many passionate appeals to religious or moral ideals both speaker and hearer are merely marking time. The emotional glow of the enthusiasm aroused by traversing the beaten path of ancient loyalties is mistaken for progress and the triumph of the right.

It would appear, therefore, that the problem of democracy is twofold. It is concerned with the organization and maintenance of an authoritative body of sentiment and its

successful application to problems as they arise. The social conscience in this sense provides the moral ballast of the community. The average man is the great conserver of values. But this body of sentiment, to be socially effective, must be hospitable to new ideas; it must from time to time undergo reorganization. A self-conscious democracy is a progressive democracy. The severest test of a social order is the reconciliation of these two phases. The one is authoritative, conservative, backward-looking; the other is critical, iconoclastic, forward-looking. We have here the recurrence in democratic form of the problem that is as old as civilization itself, namely, the problem of reconciling liberty and law, authority and freedom.

§ 6. The Paradox of Democracy

This analysis of the characteristics of the average man brings us face to face with a paradox which has puzzled more than one student of democracy. In the light of the prejudices and intellectual limitations of the average citizen which we have just sketched, the question may well be asked how are we to justify the appeal democracy is constantly making to his judgment for the settlement of fundamental issues? Macaulay, Lecky, and Peel have asserted that since the masses are confessedly ignorant of statecraft and of moral philosophy their rule must necessarily be one of ignorance and incompetency. The apotheosis of the average man is, as Faguet contends, merely the cult of incompetence.

On the other hand, Bryce states that "Where the humbler classes have differed in opinion from the higher, they have often been proved by the event to have been right and their so-called betters wrong". Indeed it has been asserted that "There has never been a period in our history, since the American nation was independent, when it would not have been a calamity to have it controlled by its highly educated men alone". It would be unfair perhaps to infer from this that learning or culture *per se* unfits a man for pronouncing upon moral issues. But it is doubtless true that the specialization

of work and the concentration of energies in the case of the markedly successful business man, lawyer, physician, or scientist, inevitably induce a narrowing of interests. The price paid for success in a chosen profession is too often an institutionalizing of thought and of feeling. Every social reformer must know from experience the truth of Mr. Lloyd's statement in his *Man the Social Creator,* "Seldom does the new conscience when it seeks a teacher to declare to men what is wrong, find him in the dignitaries of the church, the state, the culture that is. The higher the rank, the closer the tie that binds those to what is but what ought not to be." The unsophisticated sanity of the average man, therefore, gives to his utterances upon moral questions a validity not possessed by the opinion of the scholar or the pronunciamentos of the successful business man hopelessly committed to group interests.

For this reason we have made the average man the keeper of the conscience of the community. Moral valuations are not merely a matter of the intellectual appreciation of the situation. The old Socratic dictum that insight will always bring right action has long since been discarded as an ethical principle. At best, insight merely puts one in the position to do the right thing. We must have in addition the driving power of the affections. The springs of moral action are ever in intimate association with the homely but sane and powerful sentiments that find expression in the marriage tie, love of offspring, normal and healthful occupations, and community interests. The secret of moral sanity is found, therefore, in living a well-balanced and thoroughly human existence through which these fundamental interests may best find expression. Our tense industrial centers with their selfish profitism, their ruthless exploitation of man and nature, doubtless militate against the healthful functioning of the basal human impulses. In the mad pursuit of economic gains, social preferment, or the tawdry pleasures of our highly artificial city life, the sober, persistent human values are often utterly lost from view. Doubtless this explains why we find the unbiased moral judgment of our village and agricultural communities most trust-

worthy on great moral issues. If there the current of life is more monotonous it is also more normal. It is hard not to see some connection between the freedom, the vigor, and the sanity of western democracy and the healthful environment of its citizenship. No individual or group of individuals whose broad human sympathies have been warped or vitiated through abnormal social or economic conditions can be trusted to decide aright great moral issues.

For good or ill we have committed our destinies to the keeping of the average man. Often we grow restless at his blunders; we despair over his stupidity. It is easy to criticize him, for his faults are writ large in the chronicles of passing events; he has nothing to conceal. At best, however, he is more deserving of sympathy than of censure. For he lives in an age unlike any other in its desperate need of an understanding of the real meaning of life. The increment of human experience has far outrun our ability to give it rational interpretation and evaluation. We are overmastered, bewildered, even appalled at life's increasing complexity, its tragic revelations of the ape and the tiger. We need as never before a philosophy of values, not a philosophy that moons over the eternal puzzles of metaphysics, that tries to catch the drift of the cosmic weather, but a philosophy that will give us a helpful evaluation of the immediate and insistent facts of experience. Perhaps we may adapt to the average man and his problems Bernard Shaw's somewhat irreverent remark as to the Deity and say, " Don't pity him. Help him."

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CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND: CALVINISM

We have seen that in a democracy the court of last appeal on great moral issues is vested in the enlightened sentiments of the common man. But this authoritative body of moral ideals which the common man shares with his fellows is a slow growth. It presupposes prolonged social habituation. It becomes authoritative only after it has been worked into the texture of the individual's thought and life. And this in turn presupposes the disciplinary effect of stable institutions that persist relatively unchanged through long periods of years. Hence we have the somewhat paradoxical situation that the measures of moral values applied by the common man to the problems of to-day are for the most part the products of the organizations of moral sentiments that took place in the past. We must approach the problem of the social conscience, therefore, in the light of the historic perspective. We have to ask, then, what are the antecedents of the moral ideals prevalent to-day in American life?

§ 1. The Predominant Religious Interest

The earliest traces of what might be called a social conscience in America were intimately associated with religion. This was due to the fact that American colonization at first took on, for the most part, the form of religious communities. The Puritan commonwealth of New England, the Scotch-Irish of Pennsylvania and the South, the Baptists of Rhode Island, the Quakers of Philadelphia, not to mention less important groups, were the nuclei from which social and national consciousness slowly developed. Religious loyalties, which now serve merely to create denominational associations scattered

throughout the nation, gave rise in the beginning to community groups as well as sects.

It has been affirmed by an able and sympathetic student of things American that "The Puritan is the heart of American civilization."[1] This statement would of course be challenged by other authorities. Viewing our polyglot American civilization of to-day, in which the original Puritan element has been submerged by later streams of immigration, the superficial observer is often inclined to minimize the influence of the Puritan. But an intensive study of the background of American ideals, an analysis for example of the great philosophical concepts underlying our idea of the state, an examination of the principles of business enterprise and of the ideals that gave rise to modern capitalism, and finally a knowledge of those forces that have shaped our literary and artistic ideals will show that no other spiritual element in our national life has exercised an influence at all comparable with that of Puritanism and its affiliated groups.

This is due primarily to the fact that the two groups which were among the most numerous and by far the most energetic and self-assertive at the time when the national ideals were seeking formulation were the Puritans and the Scotch-Irish who have been called "the Puritans of the South". The Puritan moved westward from New England, through New York and Ohio, and finally mingled like a saving leaven among the heterogeneous elements that populated the middle and far West. The Scotch-Irish moved south from Pennsylvania until they were joined by another stream from the Carolinas and played a dominant rôle in determining the political and moral ideals of the South and Southwest. The Puritans and Scotch-Irish, thanks to their Calvinistic training, had more in common than any other two elements of our national life. They came largely from the educated and economically independent middle class of the British Isles and were in reality highly selected groups.

Calvinism was of course the religious faith of Puritans and

[1] A. M. Low, *The American People*, p. 97.

Scotch-Irish. This great creed had many intimate affiliations with the faith of other groups that cannot be classed strictly as Puritans. The Dutch of New York were Calvinists. The Huguenots of the South, who exercised an influence in the life of the nation far out of proportion to their numbers, were the spiritual offspring of John Calvin of Geneva. The liberty-loving Baptists of Rhode Island as well as the Episcopalians of Virginia had theological affiliations with Calvinism. Moreover, the spirit of religious revolt, shared by all groups, found common ground in the militant, uncompromising creed of Calvin. It provided the champion of liberty with the polemical material he needed. Here were effective weapons for the bitter warfare against ignorance and superstition in high places. Here was abundant justification for resisting the social injustice, the political absolutism and the intellectual tyranny that had become ingrained in European society. The finality of Calvinism, its logical coherence, its combination of intense political and religious loyalties with a high sense of duty, its emphasis of prudence and thrift in practical affairs, all united to lend it an appeal not shared by any other creed of Protestantism.

It is well worth asking why a creed so lofty, so logically complete, so charged with potentialities for developing the heroic spirit, has been held responsible by critics for the "centrifugal expediency" of our political life, the "catch-penny opportunism" of business, and the literary camouflage that masquerades as art in the form of the "best-seller". By what right do we lay at the door of the theology of John Calvin the blame for the "glassy, inflexible priggishness" that so nauseates the critic of American life? The question is one that cannot be answered intelligently without some insight into the spirit of Calvinism.

§ 2. The Philosophy of Calvinism: Political Rights and Duties

Calvinism as a system of thought has two poles, the absolute sovereignty of God and the utter depravity of man.

As an historical movement Calvinism has come to be identified with a group of ideas and prepossessions in theology, church polity, and morals that grew out of the acceptance of the complete supremacy of the will of God in the life of the individual and of society. Calvinism, likewise, has been called " the creed of an agonized conscience ". The Geneva to which Calvin made his appeal needed the moral tonic of his theology for internal social reforms as well as to make front against the political ambitions of Savoy. For similar reasons Calvinism gained a tremendous hold upon the middle classes of the England of the seventeenth century. It satisfied the demands of moral sensibilities outraged by the excesses of the upper classes. For it is obvious that the moral or spiritual leader who is uncertain as to the fundamental issues of life, who can point to no inherent and comprehensive purpose underlying surface changes, or who can offer no definite measures of values to men adrift from their ancient moorings and suffering from the pangs of conscience, has small chance of success.

Starting with the central idea of the sovereignty of God, everything in the universe from a solar system to a dewdrop becomes intelligible and real only as it shares in this rational unfolding of the divine will. The logic of Calvinism and the practical spirit of the people among whom it flourished demanded a political, social, and economic *mise en scene* not only in sympathy with but integrally related to this divine plan. Political justice, business honesty, and integrity in social relations were matters of a rationally and intelligently ordered life. Insight was for Calvin, as for Socrates, the key to the virtuous life but with one very important difference. The insight demanded by the Calvinistic scheme took in the entire sweep and purpose of the universe. To perform the right act even in the most insignificant details of life was to place oneself in harmony with the eternal order of things. To do wrong was to defy the universe and the God who created it. Sin for the Calvinist was thus cosmic, not social in its implications;

its heinousness was measured in terms of the responsibility of daring to disrupt the universe.

The drama of life, therefore, for the Calvinist took place in a closed system, an infinite spiritual and moral order that included the birth and death of worlds as well as the petty fate of the darling ambitions of the humblest human hearts. In this indefectible moral order the social, political, religious, or economic responsibilities of the individual were evaluated not in terms of emotional experiences, for like all rationalists the Calvinist distrusted the emotions, but in terms of the Infinite Reason who saw all things in clear perspective, the beginning and the end. For this reason the ultimate sanction of law and the source of political sovereignty were for the Calvinist religious in nature. In an interesting memoir presented in 1580 to the council of Geneva by the ministers of the city occurs this statement: " We hold it for a point entirely certain (tout resolu), that no magistrate, no matter how lofty or sovereign he be, may attribute to himself full power either to punish crimes or to pardon them in part or in whole as it seems good to him ". The reason assigned for this is that " the full power is reserved for God only, who has pity and condemnation when and upon whomsoever he pleases. For his good pleasure is the perpetual and infallible rule of all justice ".

In the background of the political philosophy of Calvinism, therefore, hovered a conception closely akin to the Stoic notion of *jus naturale*. The principles of this eternal and indefectible order of righteousness, the expression of the will of God, were given most fully in revelation. They are traceable also in man's own conscience and in nature. The administrator of the law had no right to leave unpunished what this law condemned, even where it demanded death, because this law is " divine and universal " and hence inviolable. In the case of particular laws the judge may grant grace according as time and place or circumstance may seem to warrant because these laws are human. Obviously such a régime placed great power in the hands of the clergy who were the *ex officio* expounders of the scope and meaning of these " divine and universal " laws. In

Puritan New England as in Geneva the clergy became a powerful caste, the keepers of the social conscience.

Such, in general, was the attitude in the Puritan theocracies of Geneva and of New England toward the problem of political rights and obligations. It is easy to see the affiliations between the Calvinistic notions of a natural law that is "divine and universal" and the doctrine of natural rights formulated by Locke, championed by Rousseau, and embodied in our own Constitution and Declaration. It is easy also to foresee that the very finality and inflexibility of these political conceptions must ultimately lead to a dualism between them and the political problems created by the expanding life of the nation.

"It was the Puritan conception of the Deity," remarks Van Wyck Brooks, "as not alone all-determining but precisely responsible for the practical affairs of the race, as constituting in fact the state itself, which precluded in advance any central bond, and responsibility, any common feeling in American affairs and which justified the unlimited centrifugal expediency which has always marked American life. And the same instinct that made against centrality in government made against centrality in thought, against common standards of any kind".[1] For it is obvious that, once having accepted this closed and indefectible system of values in state, morals, religion, and business, individuals and groups would not feel any necessity for creating other common standards. Hence "centrifugal expedience" became the order of the day, as exhibited in unregulated individualism in politics and religion and unrestricted competition in business.

It was inevitable that the sheer logic of events should in time drive a wedge between this closed system of indefeasible transcendental values and the common work-a-day level at which the real business of life is done. The facts of immediate experience will in the end always discredit any system of absolutism if we give them time enough. In the course of the evolution of American society, the rampant individualism born of "centrifugal expediency" has always prevented any effec-

[1] *America's Coming-of-Age*, p. 8.

tive unity of thought and life and is largely responsible for the present "heterogeneous collection of provincial moralities" that has been identified with the social conscience of the American people. As the comprehensive loyalties rooted in Calvinism gradually faded from the hearts and minds of men the residuary traditions of individualism were utterly unequal to the task of creating the new synthesis of loyalties demanded by the modern mutualized social order. The tragedy of the situation lay in the fact that Calvinism recognized no middle ground between the complete attainment of the ideal, perfect conformity to the divine order, and moral chaos.

§ 3. The Social Implications of Calvinism

Since no detail of life, even the most insignificant, fell outside the closed logical system of Calvinism, it followed that every phase of the individual's life felt the binding force of the moral ideal. Calvin justified an injunction to the magistrates to punish the drunkards and adulterers as well as the murderers on the ground "that they may have a sense of discretion in them and that they do not act like dogs and pigs". Here we have the key to the moral ideal of Calvinism. It saw in *the rationally ordered life* the one that was most in harmony with the will of God. The "blue laws" of colonial days appear to the moral sense of a later age meddlesome and tyrannical. It must not be forgotten, however, that they were prompted by a lofty conception of the moral and spiritual unity, the dignity and infinite significance of life itself. Only some such feeling of the inherent worth of life could have induced men and women to submit to punishment for absence from church, the use of gold chains, for joking about the minister, consulting a gypsy, or for saying *requiescat in pace* over the grave of a husband. The high sense of social responsibility born of this keen realization of the fundamental reasonableness and moral unity of life led to other regulations that were not so absurd from the standpoint of the modern victim of the food-profiteer. The butcher, for example, who sold spoiled meat or inedible parts of animals was forced

to make the round of the city, torch in hand, with " the aforesaid pieces of meat attached to him ".

With the loss of a vivid sense of the fundamental moral unity of life and its essential rationality went the discrediting of the corresponding comprehensive scheme of values that included the smallest details of existence. As the unity of the moral and spiritual life was broken down, these regulations inevitably took on an atmosphere of censoriousness, of unwarranted interference with personal rights and even of gossipy meddlesomeness that sapped life of its dignity. Hence it is but a step from the lofty ethical idealism of the Puritan to the hypocrisy that was almost always associated with Puritanism in its decadent forms. Moral insincerity was the necessary result of the failure to realize this lofty ethical idea. The tragedy of the situation was that Puritanism admitted of no compromise between spiritual and moral bankruptcy and the attainment of the ideal in all its impossible logical finality and its ethical absoluteness.

To be sure, there lingered in Puritan and Scotch-Irish communities, long after the theology of Calvin began to be discredited, a sort of moral residuum often called " the Puritan conscience ". It is a familiar fact that the peculiar " set " given to the emotional life of an individual or of a community often remains after the institutional forms or the ideational framework which created this organization of sentiments has disappeared or been discredited. The Puritan or New England conscience with all its noble traditions of civic and political responsibility, its indomitable moral idealism, its splendid courage, is merely the result of the moral discipline of Puritan ideas and institutions. " Fabricated in the crucible of persecution from without and pragmatical criticism from within, stimulated by fervid idealism and a stern class necessity, the Puritan conscience became the finest, and, in some respects, the most irrational element of Puritan psychology. . . . The sense of duty, *the service of right for the right's sake,* the burden of the cause of righteousness to be borne, with no thought of self, in defiance of the sneers of the world, the

seductions of the flesh, the wiles and torments of the Arch Fiend himself," [1] this is the essence of the Puritan conscience. This has been indeed the priceless legacy of Puritanism to later generations. But even the Puritan conscience is unable to survive the decentralization of our moral and spiritual loyalties; it is to-day a disappearing element in our national life.

Belated echoes of this once powerfully unified and religiously sanctioned scheme of morality can still be detected. Many good people to-day still take seriously the sin of the game of cards, condemn the theater or are scandalized at the thought of Sunday baseball. They are for the most part unconscious of the historical background of this moral attitude. Were they better acquainted with the history of the past they would know that games of chance were condemned because of their irrational element. The appeal to chance is to a certain extent an insult to the eternal rational order determined by the sovereign will of God. For the same reason the theater was opposed because the actors sought to portray the hopes and fears, the good and the evil in other personalities than their own. In this way they stultified real life and introduced confusion into the divine plan according to which each is to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling". We have here a curious approximation to Plato's condemnation of the poets and players in his ideal state because they were imitators of imitators, that is to say, they were twice removed from moral and spiritual reality and therefore were a menace to the dignity and integrity of human life.[2]

[1] Clarence Meily, *Puritanism*, p. 63.

[2] For a somewhat belated defense of the Calvinistic ethic see Kuyper, *Calvinism*. John Witherspoon, signer of the Declaration and president of Princeton, gives the typical Scotch-Irish Presbyterian attitude in his little book on the stage. An interesting sketch of the rigid application of Calvinistic ethic among Scotch-Irish Presbyterians as far west as southern Indiana and as late as the middle of the last century may be found in Professor J. A. Woodburn's brochure, *The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in Monroe County, Indiana,* Indiana Historical Publications, Vol. IV, No. 8, pp. 493 ff.

§ 4. The Puritan Ethics of Business

That there is a very close connection between Puritanism and the rise of capitalism is now being increasingly recognized by economists and historians. This is particularly in evidence in connection with the Puritan emphasis of one's " calling ". What must have been the effect upon the business ethic of the English middle class of the seventeenth century, where we must seek the beginnings of the modern capitalism, of such exhortations as the following addressed by the Puritan Richard Baxter to his congregation of Kidderminster weavers? " Especially be sure that you live not out of your calling, that is, such a stated course of employment, in which you may best be serviceable, to God. No man must live idly or content himself with doing some little chars as a recreation or on the by: but every one that is able must be statedly and ordinarily employed in such work as is serviceable to God and the common good." This " calling " may not be lightly changed and the injunction is " avoid avocations ".

The reason for this emphasis of a fixed calling is evident. It is part of the divinely ordained plan for the attainment of moral and spiritual perfection. A Jack-of-all-trades is an affront to God, a moral and spiritual menace. He is a wandering star in the spiritual firmament because he is not in the position to " make his calling and election sure ". Not work *per se,* therefore, but a certain sort of work, that which is prosecuted according to a carefully thought-out plan, covering years of time and adjusted to the countless social responsibilities of the worker, work in short that falls in with and reflects the eternally predestined plan of God—this is the type of work demanded by Puritanism. With such vast emphasis placed upon one's business it is not surprising to learn, " A man that makes his calling his business is not lazy but laborious. What pains will he take! What strength will he spend! How will he toil and moil at it early and late."

Intimately associated with the obligation to diligence in business was the element of thrift, especially in connection

with the injunction to redeem the time. "It is a more necessary thriftiness to be sparing and saving of your time", writes Baxter, "than of your money". For time is "man's opportunity for all those works for which he liveth, and which his Creator doth expect of him, and on which his endless life dependeth". When we connect this emphasis upon productive capacity due to the notion of "calling" and the duty of redeeming the time with the ascetic element which forbade the expenditure of surplus earnings upon articles of luxury, such as dress, theaters, games, and the like, we have the two elements in the character of early Puritanism that played no small part in the creation of capitalism. The moral obligation which impelled the Puritan to make use of his talents to the utmost of his ability as a divinely ordained method of assuring his soul's salvation forced him to reinvest his accumulated earnings which the ascetic simplicity of his life would not allow him to spend. Thus was a circle of activities created that undoubtedly furthered the rise of capitalism. It is, therefore, no accident, as Max Weber and others have pointed out, that capitalism has flourished most vigorously among those groups and in those countries where Calvinism has prevailed.

There are certain important corollaries arising from the Puritan philosophy of work and of wealth. Calvinism is the only great historical form of institutionalized Christianity that saw in the sheer accumulation of wealth a possible indication of God's blessing and an assurance of the eternal welfare of the soul. For, since wealth is one indication of success in one's calling and since success in one's calling comes as a result of coöperation with the divine plan, it follows that wealth rightly gained is a token of God's favor and an evidence of spiritual growth. Not only is this true but the man with wealth-producing capacity has no other alternative than to make use of his powers. To refuse to do so would be to reject the economic destiny ordained of God and this would be a sin. "If God show you a way", says Baxter, "in which you may lawfully get more than in another way, if you refuse

this and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your calling and you refuse to be God's steward".

It is of course obvious that men who thus felt the tremendous moral and spiritual values at stake in connection with the prosecution of their business would insist upon the largest measure of economic freedom. Unrestricted competition and freedom of trade were necessary implications of an economic philosophy that saw in one's business the instrument for assuring eternal spiritual welfare. There is in fact little difficulty in tracing an intimate and organic relationship between the economic liberalism of seventeenth century England and religious and political liberalism. In time, of course, the Calvinistic scheme of eternal and logically coördinated moral and spiritual values that furnished the inspiration for the struggle for economic as well as for political and religious liberty fell into abeyance. It ceased to function as a justification for the economic or the political *status quo*. However, as late as the days of Adam Smith it is still possible to trace in his notion of a preëstablished economic harmony, hovering in the background of his doctrine of unrestricted competition inspired by enlightened individual selfishness, a sort of pale and washed-out remnant of the Calvinistic philosophy of business.

It was inevitable that in the course of time the lofty moral and spiritual setting that lent dignity and moral earnestness to the business life of the early Puritan should lose its force. But the mighty fabric of capitalism for which Calvinism to a very large extent lent the ethical and religious sanctions in the days of its weak and uncertain beginnings still persisted and waxed strong and covered the civilized world. The vitality of the structure of capitalism thus served to preserve and perpetuate to a certain extent the economic ideals of Calvinism. But the norms of the Calvinistic ethics of work and of wealth, stripped of their spiritual background, have persisted in a form that makes them harsh, impersonal, and often irrational and anti-social.

The Calvinistic emphasis upon the duty of prosecuting

some "calling" we find still persisting under the modern notion that intense business activity and enterprise are fundamentally necessary to the welfare of society. It has been remarked that "economic self-assertion still remains to most Americans a sort of moral obligation". But the economic self-assertion of the modern business man is for the most part entirely lacking in any saving sense of a larger scheme of values through which business activity might find its meaning and worth. To the critical outsider the bustling world of trade often appears to be little more than a mad hurly-burly of conflicting forces. Certainly business enterprise recognizes no transcendent and far-flung goal of social welfare as its source of inspiration. It is only some such comprehensive scheme of values that can redeem business from the fundamental irrationality that lies at its heart. Because it lacks the moral and spiritual power drawn from a compelling sense of social responsibility, business has remained, since the decay of Puritanism, essentially unmoral. The economists, by accepting the divorce of economics from ethics, threaten to play the rôle of Frankensteins by creating moral monstrosities.

The incentive to accumulation in early Calvinistic ethic was two-fold. There was first the immediate and practical necessity of securing an assured place in the economic order, for economic independence was necessary to the full enjoyment of political and religious freedom. Furthermore, the accumulation of wealth was a token of the divine favor and of moral progress. There was for the early Calvinist no problem of the surplus, for, no matter how great his increased wealth, the responsibility for the faithful administration of this wealth forced him to reinvest it and to utilize it as an additional means for the development of character and the glory of God. To-day the situation is entirely changed. The incentive to business enterprise still persists but the sense of social or religious responsibility which would tend to control the accumulations of wealth and assure its employment in the interest of the common good has to a very large extent disap-

peared. There is in fact no more striking evidence of the lack of any great compelling scheme of moral values in our modern business life than just this pressing problem of our surplus wealth.

Perhaps no phase of the Puritan economic philosophy has suffered more from the decay of Calvinism than profitism. For profitism is morally one of the unloveliest phases of modern business life. To be sure, the Puritan ethic and modern business both insist that profits are essential to industry. For the modern man, however, profits rather than a livelihood is the business incentive. Every business move is estimated in terms of its "prospective profit-yielding capacity". Business, then, does not look further than the sheer fact of earning capacity. In so far as profitism is subject to modification it is due to forces that arise outside of business. We seek in vain in the conventional business ethic for any comprehensive moral principle that would provide a check upon profitism in the interest of society as a whole. We have been made painfully aware of this fact in our recent attempts to control the food and fuel profiteers.

Profit in the early Puritan ethic was never looked upon as an end in itself; it could not possibly have been identified with the essence of business. For profits, when legitimate, were viewed as an evidence of a rationally ordered and successful business and one, therefore, that was furthering the moral and spiritual welfare of the individual and of his fellows. Legitimate profits found their measure of values in a lofty and comprehensive ethical scheme, religiously conceived to be sure, but authoritative and socially efficient. For the Puritan profits were, on the one hand, a reward properly earned by effective contributions to the sum total of moral and spiritual values; on the other hand, profits were in a very real sense a form of self-fulfillment. They indicated that the business man was a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed", so that in a certain sense creative activity in the realm of business took its place side by side with the creations of the artist, scientist, or scholar. It goes without saying that

there is nothing more sadly needed in modern industry than just this socialization of business enterprise and of profits. It alone can save us from the militant, unscrupulous, economic self-assertion that has done so much to brutalize our modern life and to strip it of all enthusiasm for those things that are true and honest and lovely and of good report.

The development of his business and hence the moral welfare of the employer of labor demanded that the Calvinist be able to buy his labor in the cheapest market or one in which there was free competition. The low wage was also thought necessary for the moral good of the worker. For the disciplinary value of work made it necessary to keep wages low so as to force the lazy to undergo the moral discipline of work and to assure the practice of the virtues of thrift and diligence. The only poor recognized in the Puritan ethic were " God Almighty's poor " or the lame and halt and blind. There was no place in the Puritan scheme for any moral justification of the able-bodied poor or the unemployed. It is possible to recognize in modern capitalism's antagonism to union labor and collective bargaining and in its unwillingness to assume any social responsibility for the unemployed an echo of an outworn Puritan ethic.

Calvinism and business have long since parted company. From its very nature and claims Calvinism was unable to adjust itself to the vigorous and expanding industrial order. When men once ceased to take Calvinism seriously, all its detailed regulations of the business life became mere hindrances or were made the vehicles for other sets of values. The ethical significance of work, for example, was undoubtedly one of the noblest contributions of Puritanism to the modern industrial order. But with the rise of surplus wealth and the development of the capitalistic class the virtues of thrift, industry, temperance, and frugality, together with the related virtues of obedience and respect for the existing order of things, came in time to be thought most becoming in the working class. The capitalistic class were exempt.

The economic as well as the political philosophy of Puri-

tanism has lingered longest among the middle class, the farmer, the country storekeeper, the small tradesman. At the close of the last century this group, under the leadership of Mr. Bryan, made a last pathetic attempt to bridle the trusts, to restore lost competition, in short to revive the economic philosophy of Calvinism. The scheme was doomed to failure for the reason that Calvinism no longer exists as a vital religious attitude in the hearts of modern men. The husks of its once vigorous and noble spirit are still with us, embalmed to a large extent in the economic, moral, and spiritual fabric of society. But they no longer serve the ends they were designed to serve. They are rather a fruitful source of confusion and uncertainty. The sacrosanct character of private property, unrestricted competition, profitism, economic self-assertion, thrift, the dignity of work, the lofty sense of responsibility for wealth or for positions of power in the economic order—these and other phases of the economic life that date back to early Calvinism have long since lost their original moral and spiritual background or survive in a social order that is fundamentally alien to the spirit of Richard Baxter or of Jonathan Edwards. The fact that men still cling to this ghost of an outworn moral order, still reverence it and ever and anon still seek in a half-hearted way to vitalize it and make it serve as an instrument of reform is no small factor in the prevailing confusion in ethical ideals. It is at the same time a somewhat pathetic reminder of the lack of a compelling and comprehensive scheme of moral values in our modern life.

§ 5. The Decay of Puritanism

The forces that finally undermined the hold of institutionalized religion and particularly of Calvinism upon the social conscience were many and diverse. They began to make themselves felt towards the end of the eighteenth century but their full effects were not evident, especially in America, until after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Up to the beginning of the nineteenth

century religious ideals of the Calvinistic type ruled in Great Britain north of the Tweed " with stern and unmitigated severity ". In England the masses of the Evangelicals in the Church of England and practically all the Non-comformist bodies were Calvinists. Methodism was in its infancy. In New England Calvinism was firmly entrenched and the coming of the aggressive Scotch-Irish during the eighteenth century had extended Calvinism's influence west and south. Civilization in America was in the making. The absence of the rich and many-sided life of England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made it impossible for Americans to emancipate themselves from religious dogma. The New England of Cotton Mather was perhaps more Calvinistic than that of John Cotton. Even as late as the Revolution the forces of liberalism, aroused by the struggle for independence and expressed in such spirits as Franklin, Jefferson, and Paine, were met by Timothy Dwight in New England and by the stern creed of the Scotch-Irish of the South and West. The publication of Butler's *Hudibras* in England during the last quarter of the seventeenth century registered the decay of the hold of Calvinism upon the conscience of England, but it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Holmes wrote his satire on Calvinism, *The Deacon's Wonderful One-Hoss Shay*.

From the early decades of the eighteenth century, however, it is possible to note the working of a leaven in the heart of New England Puritanism destined to free the consciences of men from its iron rule. It was about 1734 that Arminianism began to disturb Johnathan Edwards. Against this theological liberalism he levelled the artillery of his logical dialectic in his famous work on the *Freedom of the Will*. This rise of Arminianism was but the natural psychological reaction against a creed that starved the emotions and deprived the moral life of all spontaneity and responsibility. Edwards welcomed Whitfield the evangelist to combat the heresy. But under the fire of Whitfield's eloquence the long suppressed and starved emotions of men burst into flame and gave rise to the excesses

of the Great Awakening. "It was one thing to preach irresistible grace; it was another to lack the restraining grace of common sense". Religious leaders now saw that they must apply more of "sweet reasonableness" to their harsh theology. Deism with its insistence upon God's benevolence and the inherent goodness of men gained a foothold in New England through such men as Chauncy and Mayhew. Thus was the way paved for the evolution of New England thought that finally culminated in Channing's sermon of 1819, the manifesto of Unitarianism, to be followed several decades later by Emerson and the Transcendentalists.

Other forces, outside New England and more cosmopolitan in character, were working toward the secularization of the moral sentiments of men. The great doctrines of the French Revolution, liberty, equality and fraternity, with their emphasis upon the inherent dignity and worth of man were fundamentally opposed to a theology that made God arbitrarily elect some to be the objects of his love while allowing the rest of mankind to perish like flies in autumn. This humanitarianism, especially as it came from the pen of Rousseau, spread throughout Europe, tinging the thought of Wordsworth and Coleridge and even finding a voice in the stronghold of Calvinism in the poet Burns. Nothing could be more fundamentally antagonistic to the stern spirit of Calvinism than Burns' famous line, "The man's the gowd for a' that". And certainly humanitarianism, not to mention the theology of John Calvin, is stretched to the limit in the closing lines of his "Address to the De'il":

> "But fare you well, auld Nickie-ben!
> Oh, wad ye tak a thought on men!
> Ye aiblins might, I dinna ken,
> Still hae a stake;
> I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
> E'en for your sake."

But Calvinism was doomed because, in spite of the noble rôle it had played in the cause of freedom, it was fundamentally aristocratic rather than democratic. It was the scholarly,

courteous, and pious John Cotton who said, "Democracy I do not conceive that ever did God ordain as a fit government either for church or commonwealth. If the people be governors who shall be governed? As for monarchy and aristocracy they are both of them clearly approved and directed in Scripture". The political ideal of the New England Brahmins, as the clergy have been called, was well expressed in the lines,

> "The upper world shall rule,
> While stars shall run their race;
> The nether world obey,
> While people keep their place."

Calvinistic New England long resisted the rising tide of democracy that accompanied the struggle for independence. It was not until 1833 that Massachusetts finally set aside the aristocratic ecclesiastical régime and thus made possible a real democracy. Writers have even found traces of the aristocratic tradition, based upon the Calvinistic doctrine of election, in the tendency to glorify the pecuniary aristocracy, the "captains of industry", that arose after the industrial revolution in lands with Calvinistic traditions.

Finally, it should be remembered that with the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* and the general acceptance of the principle of evolution, not only in the world of science but in the thought of the average man, a mental atmosphere has been created inhospitable to all forms of theological apriorism. The theory of evolution has forced us to modify all forms of absolutism in our thinking. But "a moderate Calvinism" is a practical repudiation of Calvinism. We might just as well talk of a moderate absolutism or a partial necessity. As the source of Calvinism's moral grandeur and its power over the imaginations and loyalties of men lay in its indefectible claims, so any toning down of these claims brought it speedily into general disrepute.

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CHAPTER III

THE TRIUMPH OF INDIVIDUALISM

It is a curious fact that with the growth of national consciousness and the substitution of a thoroughly secularized social conscience for earlier religious sanctions American life became more and more individualistic. The New England of the days of Emerson and Margaret Fuller was far more individualistic than the New England of the days of John Cotton and the Mathers. The democratic individualism of Jefferson was a great advance upon the ideas of the Virginia of earlier days. How are we to explain the paradox that hand in hand with the adoption of a federal constitution and the closer approximation of the thirteen colonies in the acknowledgment of common loyalties there went an increasing emphasis upon the rights of groups and of individuals? The problem of the rights of the individual state that finally resulted in a disastrous war was but one phase of a particularistic ethic that extended down to the most insignificant individual. This triumphant individualism found expression in the Jacksonian democracy analyzed with such brilliant insight by DeTocqueville.

The forces that created the individualism that dominated American life for the best part of the last century were complex and varied. In part they were religious, growing out of the particularism inherent in Protestantism from the very beginning and constantly manifesting itself in the multiplication of sects. In part it was the product of the eighteenth century doctrine of natural rights which tended to endow the individual with a God-given heritage of privileges and immunities that survive even after the state has been destroyed. In part American individualism was the result of the psychological training gained by a people living a pio-

neer life and constantly engaged in an arduous struggle with the elementary forces of nature. And finally the very structure and intent of American political institutions, carefully planned so as to prevent by means of a system of "checks and balances" the undue centralization of power in the hands of any one phase of the government, tended to throw the individual and the group upon their own resources and to minimize all forms of central authority.

§ 1. The Religious Antecedents of Individualism

The antecedents of American individualism, so far as religion is concerned, date immediately from the Puritan Revolution of the seventeenth century, in which we find the logical implications of the individualism of the Reformation and of early Christianity fully realized. The characteristic of Protestantism is that it returned to the early Christian teaching of the immediate responsibility of the individual to God. The setting for the resulting intensification of the individual and his responsibilities was provided by the sense of solidarity in a sublimated spiritual order binding God and the redeemed sons of men together in most intimate fellowship. Stripped of theological terminology, the essence of this solidarity was intimate, immediate, and eternal contact with the supreme source of moral and spiritual values. "Puritanism", remarks Dowden, "maintained, as far as possible, that the relation between the invisible spirit of man and the invisible God was immediate rather than mediate. It set little store by tradition because God had spoken to man directly in the words of revelation. It distrusted human ceremonies, because they stood between the creature and his Creator; the glory of the Christian temple is the holiness of the living temple which rises in the heart of the child of God. The pretensions of an ecclesiastical hierarchy are an estrangement of an adopted son of the Father; every lay Christian is himself a royal priest. The Calvinistic doctrines on which Matthew Arnold laid such extreme and exclusive stress were maintained because they were held to be Scriptural, and also because they seemed to

bring the divine agency immediately into every part of human life; predestination meant the presence of God's foreknowledge and God's will in every act and thought that pulsates on the globe; imputed righteousness meant that Christ and his faithful follower were regarded by the Father as one; and through faith, which justifies the believer, that union is effected ".[1]

It is hardly possible to overestimate the influence of this religious individualism upon American thought and life. Its secret is to be found in its emphasis of personality. Not merely humility and loving submission to the will of God but likewise a militant self-assertion and coöperation in the working out of a divine plan characterized the Puritan. The inspiring sense of a noble mission on earth, the feeling of dignity kindled by the belief that God has preferred the individual to tens of thousands of his fellows, and the gratitude and confidence born of this undeserved grace all combined to intensify in unparalleled fashion the sense of personal worth.

Most significant was the tendency of Puritanism to throw the individual back upon his own resources. In Bunyan's masterpiece there are but three actors, God, the Devil, and one anxious human heart. To Christian alone came the summons to begin the fateful journey; other lonely travelers greeted him occasionally and each went his way on the " great personal adventure "; enemies rose in his path, even the arch enemy Apollyon, all of whom the pilgrim met single-handed; down into the river of death and finally through the gates into the celestial city he passed, alone. For the Puritan " the deepest community is found not in institutions, or corporations, or churches, but in the secrets of the solitary heart ". The Puritan took his punishments as he did his salvation, alone. No preacher could help him for only the elect receive God's message of grace; no sacrament availed for the means of grace are contingent upon the divine will; no church was indispensable for while it was true *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* it was also true that the election of the individual antedated

[1] *Puritan and Anglican,* p. 11.

the church and made the church necessary; not even God himself could reverse the decree that the divine sacrifice in Christ was for the elect only. Thus did the Puritan theology tend to cultivate an individualism that was tragic in the isolation and the intensity of its ethical inwardness. Friendship in the ancient sense became almost a forgotten virtue in Puritan communities; it had no place in such a militant and self-sufficient individualism. Puritan literature warns again and again against the snares of human help and sympathy. Even the gentle Baxter advises against intimate friendships and the virile Thomas Adams writes, "The knowing man is behind in no man's cause, but best sightest in his own. He confines himself to the circles of his own affairs, and thrusts his fingers not in needless fires. . . . He sees the falseness of it (the world) and therefore learns to trust himself ever, others so far as not to be damaged by their disappointment".

The psychological effect of this throwing of the individual back upon his own emotional life was far-reaching in its influence upon social life, economic development, and political ideals. To-day when we are faced with the problems of our complex and interdependent social order, we begin to realize what a serious handicap the persistent traditions of Puritan individualism may be in the effort for social readjustment. The institutional life of Calvinistic communities took on a singularly impersonal and coldly logical character. Men shared their ideas but not their feelings. The individual never entered whole-heartedly into the social and institutional life of the community or of the state. There was always a part of him, and that the most intimate and personal, which others did not share; this most intimate and real self was reserved for God. The phase of human nature that gives us values, that suffuses the hard and ugly reality with the softening touch of human interest and sympathy, was reserved for the closet; men dealt with each other primarily as logical rather than feeling beings who were duty bound to preserve the preordained structure of the universe. Thought rather than sentiment, therefore, controlled even in purely personal con-

tacts. Hence Baxter observes in characteristic fashion, "It is not fit for a rational creature to love anyone further than reason will allow us". And if we ask the reason the reply is, "It very often taketh up men's minds so as to hinder their love of God". Calvinistic theology became "a ballet of bloodless logical categories". The deeper human impulses and sentiments which will ever defy complete logical formulation were sacrificed in the attempt to secure clarity and consistency. Even the Calvinist's God must be logical at the peril of becoming thoroughly unlovely and even immoral. In communities with Calvinistic traditions the tyranny exercised over the imaginations of men by glittering abstractions in business or politics together with a singular moral indifference towards the glaring injustices of the immediate social situation is a fact only too familiar to the social reformer.

Do we not have here the explanation for many of those curious paradoxes of character met with in communities that have long enjoyed the discipline of Calvinistic traditions? We often find, for example, a cool, calculating utilitarianism joined in unholy wedlock with an entirely other-worldly measure of human values. Men who have accumulated millions through methods that have impoverished and brutalized the community often give of this wealth to the support of foreign missions or to the endowing of religious institutions without any feeling of moral inconsistency. We find a careful and systematic effort after the accumulation of this world's goods sometimes united with almost ascetic indifference as to the enjoyment of the creature comforts they bring. Frequently we have a formal acknowledgment of political obligations, even intensity of sentiment organized about the abstract notions of liberty or equal rights before the law, together with a surprising lack of interest in the purity of city or state politics. We find great pride shown in the successful organization and extension of the individual's own business joined with little regard for the effect of that business upon social conditions in general.

This stark individualism is due to the fact that habits of

thrift, of self-sufficiency, and of independence, inherited from previous generations, are stripped of the larger moral and religious sanctions that once made these qualities socially valuable. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that God's will is no longer the guide of the consciences of most of the descendants of the Puritans and Scotch-Irish. The situation is not improved by the fact that no effective substitutes have been found for these outworn religious sanctions. Thrift, initiative, a keen sense of personal rights, and economic self-assertion may be a genuine menace where prompted by a selfish and unenlightened individualism. It then becomes very difficult for men to distinguish between rights and legalized selfishness. Only through the moral and spiritual perspective of a noble ideal are men enabled to see that often what they contend for so earnestly as their right is little more than an unearned privilege that happens to enjoy the sanction of law or of social convention.

§ 2. The Political Antecedents of Individualism

There is a close affiliation between the individualism of Protestant theology and political individualism in American life. As we have seen, two ideas in Puritanism made for individualism. The first was the sense of the immediate responsibility to God. This lifted the individual out of his social setting. The ties of family, community, state were negated by a higher and more compelling loyalty. This served to liberate the individual. The second element which provided the liberated individual with spiritual dynamic for action was the notion of predestination. The idea of being God's chosen instrument and co-worker in the execution of an infinite plan inspired to heroic effort and heightened the feeling of individual worth and responsibility.

It is a far cry from the Puritan conception of individuality rooted in the idea of predestination to the individualism of modern American democracy and yet there is a very real connection. It has been claimed that the notion of natural rights, embodied in Virginia's famous bill of rights of June

12th, 1776, and later written into the Declaration of Independence and forming the basis of American political individualism, can be traced back through John Locke to Wyclif and the Reformation. "The theory of natural rights", says Ritchie, "was not Locke's invention. Neither he nor Jean Jacques can claim the credit of having 'discovered the lost title deeds of the human race'. The theory of natural rights is simply the logical outgrowth of the Protestant revolt against the authority of tradition". The masses of men, to be sure, were ignorant of the theological doctrines of the democracy of Eden lost through Adam's sin and the democracy of grace regained through the second Adam, a doctrine which Luther and the Calvinists had used with such telling power against the mediaeval church. But the leveling effect of these ideas is distinctly present in the doggerel of the followers of John Ball, the mad Wycliffite priest of Kent,

> "When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?"

In the next century, under the pressure of their struggle against political injustice masquerading under charters and parliaments, political individualists, led by John Locke, made their appeal to natural rights just as the reformers before them had appealed to the higher rights and duties of the kingdom of grace in the interests of religious individualism. This individualism, originally religious in origin, now appears stripped of its theological setting and hence with a certain "metaphysical nakedness" which only their enthusiasm and the pressing necessities of their situation prevented its champions from perceiving.

Locke, to be sure, clothes his doctrine of natural rights in religious terminology as the following citation from his second treatise on government shows: "The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions:

for men being all the workmanship of one infinitely omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker, etc.". But it is only too evident that Locke, even where he uses religious terms, employs them as a vehicle for ideas entirely different from the doctrine of political rights of the church fathers or of John Calvin. He has parted with the Calvinistic idea that the state exists for the glory of God, with the doctrine of the divine sovereignty, with the notion of predestined inequalities among men and with the idea of pious submission to the political authorities as agents of God. We have in Locke's treatises in reality a plastic and thoroughly rationalized political individualism based upon an essentially utilitarian social philosophy. In spirit Locke's political philosophy has more in common with the egalitarianism of Rousseau and the French Revolution than with the democratic implications of Puritanism. This is significant in view of the fact that Locke influenced the drafters of the Declaration and Constitution more than any other thinker.

From the Puritan point of view all men are equal in the sight of God; all alike are members of a democracy of sin. On the other hand, inequalities among men were divinely ordained so that absolute democracy exists only *sub specie eternitatis*. Puritanism thus escaped the egalitarianism of the Latin conception of democracy reflected in Rousseau and implied in Locke's notion of the "state of nature". Puritanism was able to appeal to this notion of the absolute equality of all men before God when radical changes were necessary or when threatened with political oppression; the doctrine of the divinely ordained differences among men served, on the other hand, as a justification for social inequalities that were the inevitable results of individual spontaneity. The emphasis of the abstract *jus naturale* by the Stoics, Locke, and Rousseau, tended towards egalitarianism; the Calvinistic doctrine of inherent inequalities tended to encourage individuality. It would be interesting to trace the extent to which the stubborn individualism of Calvinism, especially among the Scotch-Irish, opposed the egalitarianism that came in with the spread

of French influence during the Revolution, was supported by the victory of Jefferson over Hamilton and found expression in Jacksonian democracy.

Certainly we have a curious illustration of the complexity and the contrariety so characteristic of American democracy in the existence side by side of Anglo-Saxon individualism and Latin egalitarianism. In politics much sentimental homage is still paid to the average man while in industry we find the most rampant individualism. The popular revivalist or the skillful political spellbinder makes frequent use of this vulgar egalitarianism that masquerades as real democracy. This is the "cult of incompetence" inveighed against so strongly by Faguet. Mediocrity and even vulgarity are lauded for the sake of silencing criticism and winning credit for a democratic spirit that really does not exist. Conventionalities of speech and conduct are cultivated. Demos worships himself in his glorification of the average man. Ambition for place or power is "camouflaged" by affecting mediocrity. The worst is not the deceit that this entails but the fact that it discounts every form of distinction, discredits scholarship, scientific achievement, or artistic talent. Such cheap egalitarianism confuses the minds of men so that they are not permitted to develop ideals of excellence. On the other hand, by glorifying mediocrity it tends to establish the rule of the Philistine. It forgets that democratic institutions are well worth striving for while equality in character or in those values that we associate with literature, science, or art is not only utterly futile, but is exactly what every progressive society must avoid. Social progress is only made possible by a diversity of talents.

There is evidence, however, that this vulgar democracy, often thinly veiling an envious spirit behind its spectacular glorification of the average man, really plays a subordinate rôle in American life. Were this egalitarianism more firmly embedded in our thought and life, socialism would doubtless prove to be more popular. But in England and America, thanks apparently to a vigorous schooling in individualistic

traditions, men still trust in the initiative and self-sufficiency of the individual rather than in the various forms of socialism. Socialism in England, for example, tends to become not so much a genuine socialistic centralizing of institutions and functions as an extension of opportunities for self-help, and there are indications of the same tendency in America. The egalitarianism made popular by the French Revolution is still reflected in political doctrines or graces the rhetoric of the Fourth of July orator but in practice it has invariably shipwrecked upon the ingrained individualism of American life.

§ 3. Individualism Encouraged by Form of Government and the Pioneer Life

More effective in fostering the individualistic spirit than either religious traditions or the eighteenth century doctrine of natural rights was the disciplinary effect upon the life of the American people of their form of government. The great fear of the thirteen colonies was power, political absolutism in any shape or form. This led them to substitute for the authority of kings or nobles or even of Demos himself a body of authoritative law. In the various bills of rights and finally in the Constitution itself they thought to lay down in comprehensive form the eternal principles of justice. Through the acknowledgment of the sovereignty of these principles they hoped to assure to themselves and their children freedom and democracy. The Constitution and bills of rights were, to be sure, only the Americanization of the traditional English liberties embodied in the Common Law. But these great conceptions were stripped of the background from which they had sprung in the mother country. They came to be viewed as part of the eternal order of things, as natural and indefeasible rights. The Constitution was looked upon, consequently, as something sacrosanct. Its mandates partook of the same indefectible character as the laws that hold the stars in their courses.

The adoption of the Constitution was largely the work of the Federalists led by Hamilton and Madison, who in all

probability accomplished their end through an appeal to economic interests. But, once adopted, the interests of both the conservative propertied groups and the element of radical democracy led by Jefferson and later by Jackson united to uphold its authority. For, curiously enough, both groups were seeking individualistic ends and hence desired a limited central government with the greatest possible freedom in local and individual matters. The real purpose upon which the desires of men were fixed was in general the accumulation of wealth through the exploitation of the vast natural resources of a virgin land. For this end there was needed the greatest possible scope for individual initiative. The measure of an efficient government, therefore, at the beginning of national life was the least possible interference with the affairs of the individual, in fact just enough of government to facilitate individualistic ends. Government was at best merely the policeman to keep order and protect property. The power of the government to interfere effectually in the life of the individual was of course further cribbed and confined by an elaborate system of "checks and balances" in the structure of the government itself.

Backed by a government thus committed to the encouragement of every form of individual initiative, the men of the third decade of the last century set about the herculean task of conquering a continent and laying the material bases of a great civilization. The effect of the ethic of this pioneer democracy developed in the arduous struggle with the forces of nature is deeply imbedded in the spirit of American life. One can still see it writ large in our great cities, such as Pittsburgh, Chicago, San Francisco. This individualistic pioneer ethic still animates for the most part business enterprise. Its most characteristic product is the "self-made man" whom Americans so delight to honor.

The traits of this triumphant individualism are familiar. It was marked by a certain magnificence of outlook due to the effect upon the pioneer imagination of the sweep of great prairies, the volume of great rivers, the monumental mass of

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mountain ranges. Bigness rather than more intensive qualities was the pioneer's measure of values. This is seen in the contempt for details, the careless disregard for the pennies. Naturally the pioneer's self-feeling was apt to be exaggerated beyond all proper proportion. The egotism of the "self-made man" is the result of perpetuating this pioneer ethic in unsocialized form in our more closely-knit society.

This pioneer ethic was characterized by a boundless, almost immoral, optimism. The optimist is one who through temperament or experience is inclined to believe that the earth and the fullness thereof are his, that the forces making for success and happiness are on his side. The pessimist is one who is not so convinced that society and nature are fighting his battles for him. Intimate association with the unbounded resources of his country and the unfailing response of bounteous nature to his slightest appeal schooled the pioneer into an attitude of easy-going confidence in his own powers and in the future of his country. Such a flabby optimism was ever ready to excuse excesses and even violation of law. Nothing could really go wrong in a world where everything united to convince man that "God's in his heaven—All's right with the world!". Associated with this uncritical optimism was the belief in progress. Life, growth, betterment, increase of material welfare, accumulation of power and of pelf—these belonged to the natural order of events. Progress was inherent, natural, inevitable; it was not a thing to be fought for. The unwritten creed of the promoter was, "This is the victory that overcometh the world even your faith".

American individualism is marked by the spirit of tolerance. This is not the tolerance that is born of a deep insight into the nature of the social problem, that realizes the necessity for the unrestricted play of individual temperaments and beliefs. It is rather the uncritical and good-natured tolerance of the man who feels that there is room for all, that there is no need to elbow your neighbor, that in a word "live and let live" is of the very essence of life. Such a tolerant attitude easily made a place for corruption and gross political

inefficiency. It was a tolerance that allowed the wasting of natural resources and the exploitation of the child in the mill, that permitted the "boss" and his "gang" to live like parasites off of the community. "To a well-fed, well-housed, suitably mated man, few beliefs, opinions or prejudices are intolerable; and the ready humor of America, tinged with the joy of mere well-being, was both an antidote and an alternative to intolerance".[1]

American individualism has tended to emphasize prosperity rather than welfare. Not the betterment of men and women in the comprehensive sense but rather the successful accumulation of the crude symbols of well-being, such as money or property, was the immediate goal of triumphant individualism. The pioneers were engaged in a struggle with the forces of nature, the mastery over things, the task of placing at the service of humanity the crude material of mine and forest and field. The immediate and unchallenged proof of the attainment of this goal was of course wealth, and especially the generally accepted symbol of wealth, money. Hence we have the most striking product of triumphant individualism, namely, a plutocracy or the group who had been most successful in amassing the symbol of this mastery over the forces of nature. What American individualism admires in the successful millionaire is not so much the sheer fact of his wealth as the indication this wealth is supposed to give that its possessor has made a great contribution to the eternal problem of placing the crude material of nature at the service of mankind.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that from the standpoint of triumphant individualism competition is the fundamental law of all life. All that was asked by the backwoodsman battling with the Indians, the trapper, goldseeker, townboomer, or promoter of every kind was a fair field for all and special favors for none. This insistence upon unrestricted competition was taken over by business and industry, and readily hardened into the idea of a fundamental and inexorable law

[1] W. Weyl, *The New Democracy*, p. 42.

of the economic world. The daring spirit of the pioneer was easily confused in business with the gambling spirit of the speculator. The successful Wall street plunger, manipulator of railroads, or vender of watered stocks was too closely akin in his methods to the prospector who makes a lucky strike to meet with moral condemnation. There is a modicum of truth in the statement of Weyl that America became "one large gambling joint, where money, success, and prestige were the counters, and the players were old men and young women, pioneers and workmen, holders of trust funds, and little boys, devoutly reading conventionalized biographies of successful men". The rôle of pioneer and promoter was taken over by the "captain of industry", who still retained a modicum of the ethics of the pioneer while exercising his vast power to eliminate individual competition. This institutionalizing of the game of business and fixing its rules was done at first in the interest of selfish individualism, but it marked a decided advance upon the earlier chaotic and wasteful period. It made possible the modern highly centralized society based upon the machine process. The mistake of big business was that it did not change the old individualistic ethic to fit the complete transformation of the whole economic régime. The social conscience did not keep pace with the improvements in business organization.

§ 4. The Need of a New Individualism

It may appear paradoxical, even incredible, to say that here in America, the traditional home of individualism, the individual is in danger. But such is the fact. The integrity of the individual is threatened by the rise of a highly centralized and mutualized capitalistic society. We are trying to solve the problem of the social order in terms of concepts formulated for the most part in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But the individualism demanded by the modern order cannot be based upon the teachings of John Calvin, John Locke, or Adam Smith. It cannot be defined in terms of the eighteenth century notion of natural rights, that hoary

"metaphysical jargon" that ended its long and withal useful career when it served as a text for Charles Sumner's turgid philippics against the slave-power in the United States Senate. What is needed is a redefinition and rehabilitation of the notion of the individual in harmony with a closely-knit, self-conscious, social democracy.

This rehabilitation of the individual has been made difficult because of the triumphant individualism inherited from other days. This is particularly true of the business world. The deeply ingrained enthusiasm for entire freedom of business enterprise has blinded the average American to the fact that this is the surest and quickest way to strip the individual of all significance. For, obviously, where there is the most unrestricted economic freedom the conditions of economic freedom will be most speedily eliminated through the rapid preëmption of the forms of natural wealth and business opportunities. Then, curious to relate, those who through the enjoyment of large individual freedom have effected this preemption of resources now make use of this power to dictate to the masses of their fellows the conditions under which they shall live and work, thereby circumscribing their lives and invalidating their liberties. Thus does individualism of the old type become a moral Frankenstein that is in danger of being destroyed by the monstrosities which it creates.

The individualism of the industrial world has become a spurious individualism. For individuality implies uniqueness, distinct qualitative differences that arise from the development of different human capacities. The artist, the scientist, the reformer, the entrepreneur in business have pronounced individualities because of the varying human values their callings have cultivated. But the business world is governed for the most part by one standard of merit, namely, money-making, profit-earning power. There are countless ways in which the money-making impulses find gratification but all are alike in that they stimulate certain phases of human nature. Individuals may differ from each other in the extent to which they are successful in money-making and in that

sense we do get differentiations in personality but it is purely quantitative, not qualitative. The captain of industry differs from the office boy or the mill-hand only in capacity for money-making; the character in each case receives the same stamp, and is inspired by the same quantitative standards of value.

The apparent individual initiative of the industrial world, therefore, is in many ways deceptive. It is due to the countless repetition of activities under slightly varying conditions, all of which have the same goal, the same incentive, namely, profit. The distinctions drawn between men are neither real nor intensive, but are based upon a rating of them all by one standard, earning capacity. The greatest compliment that can be paid to the man highest up on the ladder is that he is "a wizard at making money". Among the thousands of human beings working like bees in a vast plant there are countless precious human capacities that lie dormant or are absolutely ignored. "Mute inglorious Miltons", men with scientific, artistic, or moral gifts, are forced to fit their varied geniuses into one colossal mechanistic scheme that knows but one measure of value—earning capacity.

The uniformity, the endless repetition of similar situations, the mechanical measure of values, might be excused as inseparable from the economic situation. It is quite conceivable that even the mechanical situations of shop and office might be made effective in the development of personality if they could be inspired by moral or disinterested motives. Such, however, is not usually the case. There are doubtless thousands of men in mill and office who do project their personalities into their work and by forgetting the pecuniary motive achieve the higher levels of character. "But in so far as such is the case, it is the work which individualizes and not the unrestricted competitive pursuit of money. In so far as the economic motive prevails, individuality is not developed; it is stifled. The man whose motive is that of money-making will not make the work any more excellent than is demanded by the largest possible returns; and frequently the largest pos-

sible returns are to be obtained by indifferent work or by work which has absolutely no social value. The ordinary mercenary purpose always compels a man to stop at a certain point, and consider something else than the excellence of his achievement. It does not make the individual independent, except in so far as independence is a matter of cash in the bank; and for every individual on whom it bestows excessive pecuniary independence, there are very many more who are by that very circumstance denied any sort of liberation. Even pecuniary independence is usually purchased at the price of moral and intellectual bondage. Such genuine individuality as can be detected in the existing social system is achieved not because of the prevailing money-making motive, but in spite thereof ".[1]

[1] Croly, *Progressive Democracy,* p. 412.

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CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT SOCIETY

The period of individualism, that has left such a deep impression upon American life, came to an end about the time of the disappearance of the western frontier. "Up to and including 1880" remarks the Superintendent of the Census of 1890, "the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line. In the discussion of its extent, its westward movement, etc., it cannot, therefore, have a place in the census reports". This is a simple statement of a fact of the profoundest significance for the understanding of the evolution of American ideals. It meant the end of that constant expansion westward that had moulded American institutions, kept the nation's life fluid with all the adventurousness of the pioneer, and conditioned the fundamental conceptions of democracy. It meant that the individualism of the frontiersman, as an ever present and concrete reality, had begun to disappear. The influence that had dominated the nation's life and thought for three-quarters of a century, namely, the necessity of adjustment to the constantly receding frontier, had ceased to be felt. From now on other forces were to take the lead in the shaping of ideals and the creation of problems. The nation had passed from the period of triumphant individualism to that of the machine process. America was to take her place as a member of what Mr. Graham Wallas has called, not without a certain euphemistic magniloquence, "the Great Society".

It is possible to distinguish three stages in the westward movement that ended about 1880. First came the pioneer who depended for the most part upon the products of nature, such as the chase or the natural vegetation, for his support until

he could erect his cabin, clear and till his few acres wrested from the wilderness. Cut off as he was from communication with home and exposed to the hardships of a new country, the lot of the early pioneer was hard and full of adventure. Along his trail, now transformed into a passable road, aided often by canals and later by the railroad, came another generation of emigrants who added field to field, built permanent houses, erected schoolhouses, mills, and churches. The last stage was reached with the advent of capital and business enterprise. The early settler often took advantage of the rise in prices and sold out to the capitalist. Towns were laid out with spacious streets. Factories were built. The natural resources of the country were developed in scientific fashion. The frontier dropped farther beyond the western horizon. The individualism of the old pioneer type was no more. A new era of reorganization and centralization, the age of "big business," had come. The moving spirit in this new age was the financier or the trust promoter. He sought first to bring order out of the chaos and wastefulness of the earlier pioneer who reaped where he had not sown. The immediate instrument of the man of "big business" was the machine which he proceeded to apply to the extractive industries, production, transportation, and the like; his object was profits, his slogan was combination, and with him came a trained band of chemists, statisticians, employment managers, foresters, and expert agriculturalists. The age of individualism had given place to the beginnings of "the Great Society".

§ 1. The Effect of the Industrial Revolution upon English Society

It is possible to understand "the Great Society" only in the light of the historical perspective. For it is, in reality, the outgrowth of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the machine process. The Industrial Revolution began about 1760 and ended in 1830, though we are still feeling its far-reaching effects. England illustrates in most striking fashion the effects of the rise of the machine process that made possible the

Industrial Revolution. For the changes in English society were sharply contrasted with an old and well-developed economic life. Defoe thus describes the simple domestic system in the textile industry in Yorkshire about 1725: "The land was divided into small enclosures from two acres to six or seven acres each, seldom more, every three or four pieces having a house belonging to them; hardly a house standing out of speaking distance from another. We could see at every house a tenter and on almost every tenter a piece of cloth, or kersie, or shalloon. At every considerable house there was a manufactory. Every clothier keeps one horse at least to carry his manufactures to market, and everyone generally keeps a cow or two or more for his family. By this means the small pieces of enclosed land about each house are occupied, for they scarce sow corn enough to feed their poultry. The houses are full of lusty fellows, some at their dye-vats, some at their looms, others dressing the cloths; the women or children carding or spinning; all being employed from the youngest to the oldest". This household industry underwent some modification by the middle of the eighteenth century. The workman who at first owned his own tools, bought his own raw material and sold the finished product, now found it more convenient to turn these phases of his work over to the "factor" or middle man, who thus mediated between the worker and his market. We have thus the rise of the entrepreneur or the capitalist employer so familiar in modern business, and at the same time we have the beginnings of the modern capitalist régime.

This domestic economy of the middle of the eighteenth century was essentially mediaeval in character and was based upon definiteness of function and a more or less fixed social status. It was broken up by a series of striking inventions during the latter part of the century. Kay's fly shuttle enabled one weaver to do the work of two. This placed the pressure upon the spinners to supply the needed yarn, causing the invention of the "spinning jenny" of Hargreaves and Arkwright (1767, 1768). This invention transferred the pres-

sure back upon the weaver, resulting in the invention of Cartwright's power loom in 1785. The problem then was to get raw material enough for the improved methods of manufacture and this demand was met in the case of cotton by the invention of Whitney's cotton gin in 1793. These inventions completely transformed the old domestic system. The invention of Watts' steam engine in 1786 and its application to cotton manufacture in 1795 and to the iron industry solved the problem of energy and made coal and iron the basis of modern industry. It is possible to distinguish in general three stages in the industrial evolution of the end of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. The close of the eighteenth century saw the effective exploitation of the earlier inventions through the application of steam power. During the first part of the nineteenth century the possibilities of these and other inventions were indefinitely expanded by the application of steam to locomotion. The last stage, beginning about the middle of the nineteenth century, saw the construction of machinery by machinery. This enabled the expansion of the machine process to take place much more rapidly for it made it possible to extend the machine process by machine methods.

These inventions and the industrial changes they made possible completely transformed English society within fifty years. They gave rise to capitalism or "the gradual concentration in the hands of individuals or corporations of money, plants, implements, raw and finished materials necessary to the production of commodities". Industry was transferred from the village and the quiet country side to the noisy and unsanitary towns that now sprang up like mushrooms. The population of England in 1760 was half rural. By 1860 the rural population had dropped to 37.7 per cent and by 1890 to 28.3 per cent. Great stimulus was given not only to the production of wealth but to the growth of population. The increase in the population of England and Wales from 1800 to 1830 is estimated at more than 56 per cent. Most fundamental was the change wrought in the life of the worker.

The old domestic system gave place to the factory system. Great factory buildings were erected with little regard for the health of the worker. Broken loose from his old traditions, with no laws to protect him, and at the mercy of a new order of things, the worker was practically a slave. Division of labor made it possible to use women and children and there was a regular system of transporting children from London to the mill districts. "These little slaves worked night and day in relays, so that the beds in which they slept never cooled, one batch following another in turn for its share of rest in the filthy rag piles".

These radical changes in the industrial life of England completely disrupted the old way of life. The laws and customs shaped under the old domestic system were discredited. The sudden increase in population, the rapid transfer of workers to the cities, the exigencies of the factory system with its long and unregulated hours, the advent of capitalism, the supplanting of the old intimate relations of the household industry by the régime of the entrepreneur with his hundreds of employees towards whom he sustained only an impersonal relation, these and many other factors made obsolete the social norms by which men had regulated their relations to each other. The gap left by the decay of the old social philosophy was filled by the economic individualism of Adam Smith and his followers. The principle "each for himself and the devil take the hindmost" became the accepted industrial and political creed.

The strain caused by these radical changes was more than even English society with its traditional toughness could stand. In 1819 occurred a labor revolt that frightened the government into the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in the interest of public safety. In the long series of legislative acts, beginning with the Factory Act of 1802 and culminating in the remarkable social legislation of the last two or three decades, we have faithfully registered the attempts of enlightened public sentiment in England to adjust itself to the new order created by the Industrial Revolution and the

machine process. These legislative acts indicate in a most interesting fashion the gradual undermining of the old individualistic philosophy of Adam Smith, Bentham and John Stewart Mill through the social discipline provided by a new order. From the Railroad Companies Acts of 1823 and in the subsequent Joint Stock Companies Acts, supported indeed by Liberals with their individualistic traditions, we can detect an increasing tendency on the part of the government to interfere in matters of business. Under the pressure of the problems created by "the Great Society" men not only tolerated this increased power of the state at the expense of the doctrines of the traditional *laissez faire* philosophy but they demanded it in the interest of social justice.

The fundamental alteration through which English society passed between 1830 and 1900 is strikingly illustrated by a comparison of the owner of a coach in 1830 with the owner of a railroad in 1900. "The coach-owner", says Dicey, "set up his business at his own will and carried it on, broadly speaking, on his own terms; he possessed no legal monopoly, he asked no legal privileges; he needed no Act of Parliament which should authorize him to take the property of others on terms of compulsory purchase, or generally to interfere with the property rights of his neighbors. If his concern prospered his success was attributable to his own resources and sagacity, and enforced the homely lesson that wealth is the reward of a man's own talent and energy. There was nothing in the business of a coach-owner which even suggested the expediency of the government undertaking the duties of carriers. A railroad company, on the other hand, is the creature of the state. It owes its existence to an Act of Parliament. It carries on business on terms more or less prescribed by Parliament. It could not in practice lay down a mile of its railways unless it were empowered to interfere with the property rights of others, and above all, to take from landowners, under a system of compulsory purchase, land which the owners may deem worth much more than the price which they are compelled to take, or which they may

be unwilling to sell at any price whatever. The success of a railway company is the triumph, not of individual, but of corporate energy, and directs popular attention to the advantage of collective rather than of individual action. The fact, moreover, that a business such as that of a railroad company, the due transaction whereof is of the highest importance to the nation, must under the conditions of modern life be managed by a large corporation, affords an argument—as to the force whereof there may be a wide difference of opinion—in favor of the control or even the management of railways by the state ".[1] The railroad is only one of countless illustrations of the educative effect of the closely-knit and highly-mutualized social order of to-day upon the minds of men in regard to such fundamental issues as property, contract, competition and the like. The advent of " the Great Society " has transformed the traditional individualism of the English Liberal into a collectivistic, not to say a socialistic, philosophy.

§ 2. The Evolution of the Great Society in America

The effects of the Industrial Revolution were more marked in England than in America. When the revolution came England had a well-developed economic system. The changes wrought by the machine process stand out, therefore, all the more sharply because contrasted with the old order. In America, on the other hand, the changes wrought by the machine process were free to operate where all was economically new. Ancient guild systems or traditions as to land tenure and trade did not have to be superseded. The fundamental changes of the Industrial Revolution were wrought into the fabric of American business life along with the expansion of that life. Hence the spirit of the machine process is more gradually but more deeply ingrained into the thought and life of America than of any other great nation. We accept its philosophy all the more readily because we have known no other system. We lack the perspec-

[1] Dicey, *Law and Public Opinion in England*, pp. 246 f.

tive enjoyed by the Englishman that enabled him the better to grasp the meaning of these fundamental changes and provided him with a point of view for their evaluation and control. The problem of the machine process in America, therefore, is not so much a matter of the disruption of old social traditions as the more vital question of the effect of the reign of the machine upon human nature and the spirit of free democratic institutions.

The forces of the Industrial Revolution were felt more tardily in American than in English society for a number of reasons. Even before the beginning of the Industrial Revolution the policy of England towards the colonies did not tend to encourage manufactures. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English manufacturers strove to protect their own products from colonial competition while assuring themselves a monopoly of the colonial market. Exportation of woolen yarn or cloth from the colonies was prohibited as early as 1699. A commission appointed to investigate colonial manufactures forbade the exportation of beaver hats in response to a petition of the London hatters. In 1750 the erection of rolling mills and plate, forge, or steel furnaces was strictly forbidden. These restrictions, to be sure, were often evaded but the irritation they gave rise to was a fruitful source of the American Revolution. English manufacturers jealously guarded the inventions that made possible the Industrial Revolution. In 1782 a fine of $2,500 was placed upon the exportation of the machinery used in the cotton and iron industries. The American manufacturers were forced to smuggle in these inventions or duplicate them, which methods were followed so successfully that by the close of the century Americans were in possession of practically all the secrets of the English inventors. Samuel Slater, an apprentice in Arkwright's firm, memorized the mechanical details of the inventions, came to America in 1789 and set up at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, a mill equipped with the new machinery, from which achievement dates cotton manufacture in America.

The first decade of the nineteenth century saw the firm establishment of the machine process in America. The disturbed conditions in Europe together with the War of 1812 tended to throw this country back upon its own resources. This encouraged greatly the manufacture of commodities formerly imported from England. The census of 1840 showed the value of manufactures to be almost five hundred millions of dollars as opposed to fifty-two millions in 1820. But the growth of the factory system was slow as compared with that of England owing to the competition of English goods, the attractions of agriculture and the constant expansion towards the west. The period from 1840 to 1860 saw a much more intensive spread of the machine process. The manufacturing processes that had been fairly diffused over the country by the movement of the population were still further stimulated by inventions such as the telegraph, the sewing machine, planing machines, the steam hammer, the rotary printing press. The invention of mowers, reapers, cultivators, drills and seed-sowers brought such an effective application of the machine process to agriculture as to revolutionize it entirely. Previous to the Civil War the applications of the machine process were confined for the most part to transportation by water and rail and to the extractive industries such as agriculture. The era of pure manufacture was yet to come.

The period from 1860 to 1880 witnessed the application of the machine to industry to such an extent as to cause an industrial revolution little short of that in England just a century earlier. The causes of this rapid expansion of the machine process were various. The great demand for all commodities caused by the waste of the war was an immediate stimulus to production. The rapid development of the West had increased its purchasing power and thus widened the market for the products of eastern mills. The unprecedented development of the transportation system—the railroad mileage grew from 30,635 in 1860 to 92,296 in 1880—drew producer and consumer closer together. Finally, the imposition of heavy war tariffs upon foreign goods gave to the domestic

manufacturers control over the home market. This fact of the control of the home market was of supreme importance for the future evolution of the machine process in America. For it has been well said, " The main land of the United States is the largest area in the civilized world which is thus unrestricted by customs (duties), excises or national prejudice, and its population possesses, because of its great collective wealth, a larger consuming capacity than that of any other nation ". Supported by this vast home market, machine industry in this country laid the basis broad and deep for the vast industrial system of the present. Without it " big business " would be impossible.

The keynote of American industrial evolution from 1880 to the present has been combination and centralization. Slowly the single-entrepreneur organization, the partnership and the joint stock company have given place to the corporation. Thirty per cent of all manufacturing plants are now operated as corporations; 80 per cent of the manufactured products of the country come from corporations. In some lines of manufacture such as steel, gas, lead, oil products, sugar, meat, and woolen goods the control of the corporation is practically absolute. But the concentration in the form of corporate business enterprise in production is only one phase of the general tendency to concentrate. Concentration of production has brought concentration of population in cities and industrial districts. There is the same tendency to concentrate in transportation facilities, both by rail and water, and in the means of communication as in the telephone and the telegraph. Concentration in high finance led to the appointment of a Congressional committee " to investigate the concentration of control of money and credit ". Concentration of wealth has reached the stage where 2 per cent of the population own 60 per cent of the wealth of the country. Concentration in other phases of modern life have come for the most part, however, as corollaries of concentration in business. For the concentration of private control of industrial activities through trusts, pools, holding companies, in-

terlocking directorates, or otherwise has now become the order of the day. Great corporations such as the Standard Oil or the United States Steel extend their lines of business enterprise far beyond oil and steel and control numerous smaller concerns more or less remotely connected industrially.

This large scale combination is made possible in manufacturing through the control and organization of a tariff-protected home market, the development and combination of railroads, the standardizing of machinery, scientific methods and management, and increased facilities for communication such as the telephone and typewriter. The advantages of combination are the introduction of improved and expensive machinery, the elimination of waste through the use of by-products, easier solution of the problem of labor, easier handling of raw materials and marketing of the finished product. The causes of large-scale combination are to be sought in the social conditions peculiar to the last few decades, namely, the preëmption of natural resources and decreased opportunity for speculative gains of the old type, the business risks connected with the mastery of world-markets now opening up, the intensity of competition due to narrowing opportunities, the profits made possible through a large-scale and standardized production of necessities such as gas, ice, oil, steel, meat, tobacco, or sugar, the possibilities of increasing profits through overcapitalization, and finally a high tariff. According to Mr. Havemeyer of the sugar trust, in his testimony before the Industrial Commission, the tariff was a direct incentive to the formations of most of the combinations previous to 1900.

It is apparently a far cry from our modern highly mutualized and corporate life, "the Great Society" of Mr. Wallas, to the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in England towards the close of the eighteenth century. But it should be evident from this sketch that the connection is a very real one. It is evident, furthermore, that the movement in the last stage of which we are now living includes far more than the application of certain inventions in the textile industry. The discovery

and application of the vast technology of the machine process to the satisfaction of human needs has given rise to the philosophy of the machine process which gradually has wrought itself into the spirit of our institutions, altered fundamentally our way of life, undermined our theories in economics and politics, and invalidated time-honored beliefs in ethics and religion. It took Europe several generations to absorb the great doctrines of the French Revolution. After the lapse of a century we are just becoming aware of the implications and applications of the Industrial Revolution for modern life.

Broadly speaking, the problem created by the rise of the Great Society is one of adjusting the political and ethical traditions inherited from the eighteenth century and accentuated by long contact with a frontier community to a way of life shaped by large-scale manufacture, the big city, organized labor, and world-federations. We have to ask whether the traditional norms underlying home, school, church, and state provide us with adequate solutions for the problems of to-day. Back of those norms lie generations of social experience under a simple agricultural régime that was essentially individualistic. It knew no system of complicated prices, no mysterious markets, no profiteering middle man. The relations of employer and employee were direct, intimate, personal, and regulated by time-honored customs. The worker was identified with a definite community and did not wander from city to city or state to state like the industrial nomads that harvest the western crops. In every sphere of life, industrial, social, religious, or political, authoritative norms inherited from the past and firmly fixed in public sentiment cemented the various groups into one organic whole. The child in the home, the apprentice in the shop, the laborer on the farm did not have it in their power to stray far from the path of social rectitude. The body of authoritative social standards hedged in the individual and presented to him at birth final solutions of many of those great problems of life which to-day each faces single-handed and alone.

The Great Society with its vast urban agglomerates, its

impersonal pecuniary measures of values, its mad struggle for profits, its unprecedented industrial and financial combinations made possible by the machine process, presents a human drama different in a thousand ways from the simple agricultural community of the past. It is impersonal in its relations, quantitative in its measure of values, highly mutualized, and interdependent. But the sentiments of men and women are still organized for the most part in terms of the old individualistic régime. The doctrine of individual salvation is still sung in our hymns and preached from the pulpit; in business we still insist upon unrestricted competition, freedom of contract and property as a natural right; in politics the individualistic *laissez faire* democracy of Jefferson and Jackson is still popular; in education we are hardly able yet to conceive of culture except in terms of the privileged and caste atmosphere of the college of colonial days. The spiritual poverty together with the complexity of the Great Society seem to threaten it with moral bankruptcy.

§ 3. The Traits of the Great Society as Illustrated by the Corporation

What, in general, are the characteristics of our modern industrial order, the Great Society of to-day? First, it must be observed that the Great Society is international rather than national. In spite of differences in race, creed, language, or tariff restrictions, the great nations of Christendom constitute one vast industrial whole. To be sure, ideal values embalmed in art, literature, law, science, and religion have always united America and the nations of western Europe in one common civilization. But the war has only brought out the more clearly the extent to which community of interests had been intensified by the discipline of the Great Society. The unity which Rome first achieved, which was perpetuated in sublimated form by the mediæval Church, now bids fair to be permanently secured through the implications and applications of the machine process.

Again the Great Society is characterized by greater mo-

bility than any other period of the world's history. The highest efficiency in the working of the new industrial order means not merely freedom in the choosing of callings and the adaptation of talents within any national group. There is necessary also great fluidity among populations and in the functioning of capital. For the exigencies of the modern industrial order require something approximating the internationalization of both capital and labor so that they may flow where they are needed for the accomplishment of the world's work. Similarly trade is opposed in spirit to all artificial barriers and seeks naturally the international point of view.

Finally, the Great Society is both materialistic and idealistic. Viewed from the standpoint of the machine, we are restricted to a philosophy of physical energy, quantitative standardization of values and a mechanistic and deterministic conception of the world. Furthermore, ours is preëminently a pecuniary civilization. Profits are the driving force of the vast colossus of business and the pecuniary obligation is possibly the one form of the ought that is best understood and obeyed by every class of Americans. On the other hand, in no civilization known to history is the humanistic note so prominent and the confidence in man's powers so strong. One looks in vain for any element of otherworldliness in our militant industrialism. The gospel of the modern order, namely, "prosperity", "social welfare", may not occupy a high spiritual level but it is robustious, humanistic, and passionately devoted to the things of this world. There is behind our efforts for child welfare, conservation, or prohibition, a vital and compelling belief in a better world yet to be. But this is not the idealism of the dreamer or the mystic. It is an idealism of action. For it seeks through strenuous and unremittent struggle with the problem of the moment to make clear to itself the goal of endeavor. The American people, who more than any other have incarnated the spirit of the Great Society, are the chief representatives of this idealism of action.

It is in the corporation that we find best reflected the spirit of the Great Society for, as we have seen, the corporation

is the outstanding feature of the new order. In the typical corporation there are three groups, the stockholders, the directors, and the salaried manager. The stockholders furnish the capital and turn over the policies of the corporation to the directors. These in turn usually intrust the actual direction of the concern to the manager. Here is a situation that encourages moral laxity owing to the failure to localize responsibility. And, as a matter of fact, the temptation to take advantage of this impersonal power of the corporation has been directly responsible for one of the darkest pages in the history of American morals. An economist of note says of the moral character of corporations: " Corporations have no moral standards. Their directors have shown themselves willing to wink at practices on the part of officials they appoint to which they would not themselves stoop. Corporation officials, moreover, do not hesitate to do things in the name and under the cover of the corporations which they would be ashamed to perform openly for themselves. In the United States corporations have been guilty of buying legislatures, bribing judges, entering into agreements with political parties insuring them certain privileges in return for campaign contributions, in fact of every sin in the political calendar. It is largely owing to them that the tone not only of business life, but of political morality, is so much below the standards of private morality ".[1] What are the idiosyncrasies of the corporation that give rise to these criticisms?

In the first place, it should be remembered that the corporation is dominated by an absolutely rationalistic spirit. It is the choice flower of the machine process and the machine is logical or it is nothing. The machine is the physical incarnation of cold impersonal thought processes applied to the mastery and direction of physical energy. Just as Jefferson's natural rights doctrines and Adam Smith's *laissez faire* principles of competition and " enlightened selfishness " were the products of rationalism in politics and economics, so the Industrial Revolution is the result of the application of cold

[1] Seager, *Principles of Economics,* p. 163.

reason to industry. There is, therefore, justification for the oft-repeated assertion that there is no sentiment in business. Certainly sentiment did not preside over the birth of the corporation. When this last prodigy sprang like Minerva full-armed from the brain of the "captain of industry" it was, like the blue-eyed goddess of wisdom, a stranger to sentiment, the very incarnation of reason as applied to business. Now it goes without saying that pure logic is neither moral nor immoral. The logical principles embodied in the steam engine or an automobile are unmoral, that is, they are indifferent to the eternal human struggle for the morally good. For we can only have a truly moral situation where there are freedom and contingency. Mechanism and morals mix as little as do oil and water. Not without justification, therefore, do men speak of the "soulless" corporation. It is soulless for the same reason that a machine is soulless, for both the machine and the corporation are the products of the same great movement, the Industrial Revolution.

Again the corporation tends to take its standard of values from the machine. That is to say, the corporation knows only quantitative units of measurement. Scientific management contemplates the worker as the incarnation of so much physical energy working in time and space. By means of the stop-watch and otherwise the attempt is made to measure this energy in spacial and temporal units so that there may be the greatest economy and efficiency possible with the given human material. Likewise the various forms of human activity from the stoker of the furnace to the manager of the plant are all made to conform to a quantitative scale of pecuniary values. They are estimated in terms of their earning capacity. But there is a vast and important phase of human experience which this quantitative scale of measurement ignores, namely, the realm of values. Loyalty to home or country, honesty, veracity, not to mention the interests that belong to religion and art, can never be caught and catalogued by any quantitative method.

Because the corporation is coldly rationalistic in its point

of approach and applies only quantitative measurements it is impersonal in its attitude towards men and things. And it is the impersonality of the corporation that enables us to understand its moral "blind spot." The moral obtuseness of large-scale business is not an indication of its inherent wickedness as many imagine. Large-scale business as at present constructed simply does not move in the world of the familiar moral dimensions of the average man. To the criticism that it ignores the good old-fashioned honesty of our forefathers it would possibly reply frankly that it does not "carry that line of goods." Its historical background of methods and traditions has little in common with the background from which the average man draws his ethical norms. This enables us to understand the curious but tremendously significant gap that exists between the philosophy of large-scale business and traditional ethics. The stockholders in a given corporation move at the level of traditional ethics; the directors move in a more impersonal atmosphere, while the manager who deals with his men on the one hand and the politician on the other has been so thoroughly disinfected morally that often he has little more conscience than the machines in his factory. The traditional ethics he may observe in his home has little in common with the "business proposition" which he must face as the manager of a huge impersonal corporation. As we pass from the conventional level of the stockholder to that of the actual workings of the corporation we enter another realm with different standards of value and a different philosophy of life.

This does not mean that the traditional virtues of honesty, thrift, and the like have disappeared entirely from the economy of large-scale business. They are present but have undergone a curious transformation that harmonizes them with the spirit of the machine process. They have been transferred from their original personal setting to the impersonal and mechanistic setting of the corporation. The integrity of a corporation is judged in economic terms. Its reliability is a matter of its business relations, its credit or its control of re-

sources. It is trusted because it has made good according to the impersonal and mechanistic principles that dominate the corporation. These principles have little to do with the personal morality of the individuals connected with it. Honesty and business integrity in other words have become a mechanical and corporate matter from which the personal element is largely eliminated. Likewise frugality has been depersonalized. Thrift in big business is a matter of the application of scientific methods to the elimination of waste. The director of a great corporation who will insist upon the introduction into his business of every device for the saving of material and labor will exhibit lavish expenditure in his own private life. The level of personal morality has little or no connection with that of the big business.

Now it is evident that moral responsibility includes the whole of a man's life. It is inconsistent to live a righteous and irreproachable life within the home circle, the church, and among friends while playing the rôle of a freebooter as director of a corporation. But we often find that the individuals who live this curiously double existence in many cases seem to feel no moral incongruity in their conduct. Why this curious moral *non sequitur* in our modern life? This brings us to the heart of the problem so far as the social conscience and the Great Society are concerned. The solution of the paradox lies in the fact that there are vast areas of our modern life that have completely outgrown the traditional norms of the social conscience. For it is a familiar fact that the principles of right and wrong that one generation applies to its problems are usually the product of the moral experiences of its fathers. Where rapid changes take place in the structure of society so that the ethical norms inherited from the past do not have time to adjust themselves to the present there will always be moral maladjustment. There will arise spheres of activity which the ethical ideals of the past do not completely cover or for which they are utterly inadequate. The result will be that so far as these new areas are concerned we shall have moral indifference, perhaps moral anarchy. The moral anarchy that has emerged in some phases

of " big business " of recent years and made the trust anathema in the minds of many good people is merely the result of men trying to live their lives and conduct their affairs in situations for which there are no accepted and authoritative ethical norms. For this moral anarchy, therefore, we are to hold neither " big business " nor the " captain of industry " primarily responsible but the incompetency of the social conscience.

A decade or more ago a brilliant book appeared, with an introduction from the pen of President Roosevelt, in which there was a scathing arraignment of the trust-born, latter-day iniquity. " The man who picks pockets with a railroad rebate, murders with an adulterant instead of a bludgeon, burglarizes with a ' rake-off ' instead of a jimmy, cheats with a company prospectus instead of a deck of cards, or scuttles his town instead of his ship, does not feel on his brow the brand of a malefactor. The shedder of blood, the oppressor of the widow and the fatherless, long ago became odious, but latter-day treacheries fly no skull-and-cross-bones flag at the masthead." One detects here something very like a distortion of the moral perspective, otherwise the writer would temper his language with the reflection that the heinous crimes ascribed to the " criminaloid " or new type of sinner created by the Great Society are not entirely of his own concoction. He is so unfortunate as to occupy a place in modern society where he becomes the scapegoat for the bewildered and uneasy conscience of a community out of touch with its time-honored traditions and groping for a solution of its difficulties.

The typical sin of the Great Society is the betrayal of trust. But an examination will show that betrayals of trust through speculation, graft, jerry-building, adulteration or otherwise, occur in just those areas of society that are not adequately covered by traditional ethical sanctions. The profiteer who through a combine fleeces the public would scorn to wrong a friend or betray those of his own household. The problem then resolves itself into a question of the elimination of the impersonality, the anonymity of modern life that is made an excuse

for moral irresponsibility. These unprotected and outlawed areas of the Great Society must be brought under the rule of an enlightened social conscience.

§ 4. The Future of the Great Society

A word may be added in conclusion as to the future of the Great Society. The mastery of machine technology and the application of it to the problems of production and transportation and the like have undoubtedly increased to a vast extent man's power over nature. The dangers of famine and plague have been thereby minimized and in so far forth human life has been placed upon a more secure basis. But out of the very pooling of interests and powers that characterize the Great Society and the mutualization and interdependence this has created have arisen a host of other problems. Financial crises now are no longer affairs of single nations but include the whole world of finance. War has now become in every sense of the word an international problem. The unspeakable wrong and suffering caused by one great militaristic nation in the heart of Europe would have been impossible in the old days of isolation. America, notwithstanding the thousands of miles of sea that separate her from Europe and her traditional doctrine of national self-sufficiency, was drawn into the struggle, a most eloquent testimony to the interdependence of the Great Society. Solidarity instead of bringing security has only multiplied our problems.

Again the very recency of the Great Society and the artificiality inseparable from the large part played by the machine process in its creation raises the question as to its power to endure. The history of the great civilizations of the past seems to show that they have suffered more from the inner stresses and strains of their own lives than from outside dangers. Without in any wise committing one's self to a pessimistic view of life it must be confessed that there are forces at work in the structure of the Great Society as it now exists that give us pause. The very real dangers that have arisen from the profiteer and the realization of how deeply ingrained is his

point of view in business ethics are, to say the least, not encouraging. It only indicates how radical must be any reconstruction of business that seeks to control or eliminate profitism. The impersonality inherent in the machine process and its creature, the corporation, suggests the long and thorny road the nation must travel before it really succeeds in making business enterprise completely moral and rational. The clash between powerful group interests as seen in frequent strikes and the widespread discontent with the present industrial and political orders threatens that moral solidarity that lies at the very heart of democracy.

These problems have given rise to a fear that is thus expressed by a recent writer. "Throughout the politics and literature of the twentieth century one traces the fear, conscious or half-conscious, lest the civilization which we have adopted so rapidly and with so little forethought may prove unable to secure either a harmonious life for its members or even its own stability. The old delight in 'the manifest finger of destiny' and the 'tide of progress', even the newer belief in the effortless 'evolution' of social institutions are gone. We are afraid of the blind forces to which we used so willingly to surrender ourselves. We feel that we must reconsider the basis of our organized life because, without reconsideration, we have no chance of controlling it. . . . Our philosophers are toiling to refashion for the purposes of social life the systems which used so confidently to offer guidance for individual conduct. Our poets and playwrights and novelists are revolutionizing their art in the attempt to bring the essential facts of the Great Society within its range."[1] The uncertainty and moral bewilderment caused by the sudden rise of the Great Society brings us to the topic of the next chapter.

[1] Wallas, *The Great Society*, p. 14.

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CHAPTER V

OUR UNCERTAIN MORALITY

§ 1. What is Americanism?

The breakdown of ethical traditions sketched in preceding chapters has given rise to an uncomfortable feeling of uncertainty as to the nature of our ultimate loyalties. Measures of values in morals, ancient religious beliefs, standards of business ethics long accepted without question, national policies considered as inviolate as the "faith once delivered to the saints", are now being challenged, in some cases actually repudiated. As a nation we have become socially self-conscious to a painful degree. This has resulted in an embarrassing sense of moral and spiritual decentralization. Bernard Shaw's bon mot, "a nation of villagers", which at first merely amused, is now felt to carry the sting of reality. We are beginning to wonder whether the publicist's phrase "a nation of uncritical drifters" and the sober scholar's characterization of our ethical stock in trade as "a heterogeneous collection of provincial moralities" do not contain a large measure of truth.

Recently an attempt was made by the editor of a scientific journal to secure a satisfactory reply to the question, "What is Americanism?"[1] Representative Americans in every calling in life were selected and the query was submitted to them: "Upon what ideals, policies, programs, or specific purposes should Americans place most stress in the immediate future?" The replies show the widest variety, not to say contrariety, of opinion. The panaceas suggested included socialism, equal opportunity in business, happiness, prolongation of human life, application of the methods of physical science to human nature, liberty mental and physical, the restoring of the balance between social forces, the Gospel of Christ, exact facts

[1] Small, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 20, pp. 433 ff., 613 ff.

in the different departments of life where facts count, further development of individualism, industrial and social democracy, equality of opportunity, abolition of the color line, the maximum well-being of all the people, eugenics, the single tax, internationalism, charity.

No more impressive array of data could be assembled to show the widespread uncertainty, even among educated American leaders, as to the ultimate values that underlie American democracy. The editor's comment upon these data is suggestive. "The exhibit reflects the fact that if there be such a thing as Americanism it is not composed into a widely accepted code. It is articulate only in the case of scattered individuals. We have opinions, but what is our opinion? We have purposes, but what is our purpose? We have policies, but what is our policy? We have standards, but what is our standard? We have ambitions, but what is our ambition? We have ideals, but what is our ideal? Those of us who know what our individual opinions, purposes, policies, standards, ambitions, and ideals are, mostly think we are too busy to compare them with others, and to find out whether it is right or practicable for them to become the guides of Americans in general."

It is safe to say that whatever mature and intensive thought there is in American society is concerned for the most part with isolated problems or with groups and movements. There is little attempt on the part of leaders to correlate the interests they represent with those of the nation at large. One man sees the entire social problem in the light of the "color line," another in terms of social injustice towards the worker, another in terms of a religious attitude, and still another in terms of the problems presented by eugenics. Everywhere we find more or less isolated centers of thought, intensive investigations of problems but little or no effort to coördinate those problems with the thought and experience of the nation as a whole.

It would seem, furthermore, that these interests which concern men are economic, racial, biological, religious, scientific, but not primarily moral in the highest sense. The essence of

the moral is its wholeness, its social character. One cannot think in ethical terms without correlating his thought with the problems of the community or the nation. For in its last analysis morality has to do with matters that make for social sanity. Ethical values are those which are fundamental for the solution of the social problem, the essence of which is how to enable men and women to live together with the least amount of friction and the best safeguarding of human values. If it be contended that we are moral in the larger sense only when we orient our immediate circle of interests in terms of their bearing upon the comprehensive social interests, it can hardly be said that American society is moral at all. It possesses a morality, to be sure, but it is haphazard, local, piecemeal. It is the morality that embraces those norms which must be observed if the business man is to get along peacefully and successfully with his business associate. It is the morality that is necessary for the minister to observe if he is to enjoy the sympathy and confidence of his sect. It is the morality the member of the labor union finds essential to the welfare of his group. It is the morality which the political party insists each shall observe if he plays the political game. We have the morality of "big business", the morality of butcher, baker, and candlestickmaker; we have the morality of the scientist, the educator, the Jew, the Catholic, and the Protestant. But there is at present an absence of comprehensive authoritative norms, acknowledged by all classes and set up as the common goal of a common citizenship in a great democracy. In a word, we do not have as yet a fully self-conscious democracy.

To these animadversions it may be replied, of course, that there are, running through these various groups, certain great ethical conceptions such as justice, fidelity to contract, truthfulness, honor and the like or perhaps the great norms of the democratic conscience, liberty, equality, and fraternity. These, it may be said, rather than the individual's particular social theory or the ideals of his group, are what hold society together. The reply to this is that justice or liberty are mere abstractions except in so far as they become concreted in a

social program or are able to make use of social instrumentalities. Even the bitterest opponents have little trouble in agreeing upon a definition of justice in the abstract. The rub comes when they try to unite upon a social policy or seek to enact laws that will embody the principle of justice. It is doubtful whether any great ethical or political norm can ever claim reality apart from the immediate social instrumentalities through which masses of men are enabled to make it part of their thought and life. Ideals, to be sure, are always concrete realities in that they are the organizations of the ideas and sentiments of definite individuals. But even these individual subjective attitudes must become more or less institutionalized before they can ever become socially effective.

§ 2. Conflict of Individualism and Collectivism

Much of the confusion that reigns in the social mind of America at present is due to the conflict between two tendencies which we may call individualism and collectivism. Collectivism is opposed to individualism in the traditional sense in that it places the rights and interests of the many above those of the individual when they conflict and yet without seeking to destroy individual initiative. Collectivism seeks to control and to supplement individual activities in the individual's own interest as well as in that of society. Collectivism, therefore, is to be distinguished from socialism which tends to subordinate the individual by placing the instruments of production in the hands of the state, and by eliminating competition and private property.

During the last few decades collectivism has gained the upper hand over traditional individualism. In a classical passage, written in 1881, Lord Morley thus describes the growth of collectivism in England. "We have to-day a complete, minute, and voluminous code for the protection of labor; buildings must be kept pure of effluvia; dangerous machinery must be fenced; children and young persons must not clean it while in motion; their hours are not only limited but fixed; continuous employment must not exceed a given number of

hours, varying with the trade, but prescribed by the law in given cases; a statutable number of holidays is imposed; the children must go to school and the employer must every week give a certificate to that effect; if an accident happens notice must be sent to the proper authorities; special provisions are made for bake houses, for lace-making, for collieries, and for a whole schedule of other special callings; for the due enforcement and vigilant supervision of this immense host of minute prescriptions there is an immense host of inspectors, certifying surgeons, and other authorities, whose business it is ' to speed and post o'er land and ocean ' in restless guardianship of every kind of labor, from that of the woman who plaits straw at her cottage door, to the miner who descends into the bowels of the earth, and the seaman who conveys the fruits and materials of universal industry to and fro between the remotest parts of the globe."

Three decades later ex-President Eliot wrote of the spread of collectivism in America, " Many persons are still living who remember Boston when it had no sewers, no public water supply, no gas, no electricity, no street-railways, and no smooth pavements: Albany when pigs roamed the streets, the only scavengers; Baltimore when each householder emptied the refuse from his house into the gutter in front of his door, and the streets were cleaned only by animal scavengers and occasional rains. Seventy years ago Massachusetts, as a state, provided no hospitals for its sick, wounded, or insane; issued no acts of incorporation with limited liability, built no docks, improved no harbors, regulated neither steam nor electric railways, exercised no control over the issue of shares or bonds of incorporated companies, built no highways, and appointed no commissions to construct systems of sewerage, water supplies or parks—in short performed none of the functions which to-day engage most of the attention of its legislature and its officials."

The psychological effect of this striking mutualization of the social order characteristic of the last few decades is most important for our understanding of the prevailing uncertainty

in our moral ideals. The pressure of a social order in which men have become so interdependent tends to elevate the wisdom of the collective mind above that of the individual. "The sentiment or conviction," says Dicey, "is entertained by every collectivist, that an individual does not know his own interest, and certainly does not know the interest of the class to which he belongs, as well as does the trade-union, or ultimately the state of which he is a member". This tendency to place in the verdict of the group the ultimate source of moral authority is of course directly antagonistic to the traditional individualism which made the verdict of the personal conscience supreme. There is a complete shift of the moral emphasis. For the individual is now surrounded by a network of laws and regulations that remind him at every turn of his membership in a community with infinite ramifications, that his every act affects his fellows no matter how remote their lives from his, that the efficiency and honesty of his work are matters not of himself and his employer but of the entire commonwealth of which he is a member, that, in fine, it is now true as never before in the history of the world "no man liveth unto himself".

In such a situation the traditional militant ethic of the pioneer and of triumphant individualism is worse than useless. It becomes in many cases a genuine hindrance to the successful solution of great ethical issues. These more or less outworn individualistic traditions persist, however. They provide us with the only organized and authoritative social norms that the community knows. They keep the machinery of the social order going, though with much creaking and groaning. The lack of teamwork is unmistakably in evidence. There is a dearth of universal sanctions to which the conflicting groups and interests may appeal in the effort to adjust their differences. Classes and groups have their own standards of "right" and "wrong". We have group ethics and class standards galore but few comprehensive norms that all are willing to acknowledge.

Contrast, for example, the standards of the industrial

group with those of the business group. The latter is inclined to emphasize the inviolability of contract, the sacrosanct character of private property, and the finality and universality of the pecuniary standard of values. The workers tend to view property as a more or less fluid entity belonging to society as a whole and they subordinate pecuniary to human values. The business man emphasizes competition as the life of trade; the worker minimizes competition as the enemy of group welfare. The business man stresses individual liberty and personal initiative; the worker subordinates individual activities to those of the group. The business group finds the incentive to action in profitism; for the worker profitism is only of interest as it serves to elevate the standard of living for the group. The average business man is actuated by the conventional conception of patriotism which says " my country whether right or wrong "; organized labor is often inclined to place international above national interests, at least in theory, and where labor is oppressed the tendency is to repudiate patriotism as a selfish class motive. The difficulty of finding common ethical ground upon which these two groups may meet is obvious. Owing to the impact of widely divergent interests and traditions the emotions and sentiments of these groups and hence their standards of moral judgment, have little in common; in many respects they are fundamentally antagonistic on the great issues of modern life. The one group has the greatest difficulty in gaining even an intellectual appreciation of the philosophy of the opposing group, so great is the educative effect of the stresses and strains of group economy.

When the inevitable clash between these various conflicting interests comes, what attitude does American society assume toward the problem? For the most part we fall back upon the typically American habit of mechanical, haphazard, and largely irrational ways of effecting adjustment of the issues concerned. In other words we become (morally) " uncritical drifters ". Organized labor strikes, that is, it repudiates reason and law in favor of force. The employer meets force with force and pickets his works or telegraphs for

the state police. The community looks on in pathetic moral impotence while property is destroyed, community welfare sacrificed, and often lives lost. There is lacking any higher ethical tribunal, the mandates of which can be made binding upon both groups. The prevailing traditional individualistic ethic finds itself utterly incompetent to deal with the situation. A collectivistic régime demands a complete reorganization of the social conscience.

§ 3. The Dualism in American Life

In reality, however, the causes of our uncertain morality are deeper than the confusion due to the conflict between individualism and collectivism. They can be traced back to a dualism that has existed in American life from the very beginning. "In the higher things of the mind," writes Santayana, "in religion, in literature, in the moral emotions, it is the hereditary spirit that still prevails, so much so that Mr. Bernard Shaw finds that America is one hundred years behind the times. The truth is that one-half of the American mind, that not occupied intensely in practical affairs, has remained, I will not say high and dry, but slightly becalmed; it has floated gently in the back-water, while, alongside, in invention and industry, and social organization, the other half of the mind has leaped down a sort of Niagara Rapids". Here, ultimately, in this gap between the genteel tradition that has prevailed in politics, religion, art, and philosophy and the pragmatic and utilitarian ideals of actual life, we must find the explanation of the singular impotence at the higher levels of the intellectual life of America.

Primary among the factors that have produced this dualism in American life were the actual conditions faced by the founders of the nation. The early fathers were pioneers. They undertook the herculean task of creating a civilization in the wilderness. They did not possess nor did they have time to create their own political or social institutions. They had no indigenous social heritage of religion, literature and customs necessary to the establishment and maintenance

of a civilization. It was inevitable that they should appropriate these for the most part ready-made from the mother country. But the bills of rights, the Declaration and the Federal Constitution which were thought to embody the last word of political wisdom, were in reality the outgrowth of the advanced political experience of the England of the eighteenth century. By making these documents final the American people gave hostages to fortune so far as the development of a political conscience, intimately related with the expanding life of the nation, was concerned.

Thus was laid the basis for an unfortunate dualism in the political loyalties of the American people. It was the dualism that was destined to arise in time between the fixed, law-made democracy of the Constitution and the practical democratic ideals that were developed in immediate contact with the problems of the national life. The lofty ideals of the Constitution have remained fixed while the industrial, political, and social factors entering into our civilization were constantly changing. The result is that theoretically we are idealists while in practice we are pragmatists or even materialists. By tradition and training we place in the foreground certain ultimate conceptions as to the meaning and values of life, such as equality, freedom, peace, and universal brotherhood. It is only when forced to make supreme moral decision, however, as in the case of the recent war, that these lofty principles actually merge and play a part in our thought and life. The principles that actually shape business and politics and even social relations have been anything but idealistic. Two souls, it would seem, dwell in the breast of the average American, that of the idealist and that of the materialist. When the tide of life runs smoothly and the stern necessity for criticism and analysis does not press upon us, the average American is apt to be thoughtless and adventurous, a materialist in business, a Philistine in culture and a prig in religion and morals. It is only at great critical moments when he is forced to pass through some national Gethsemane, as in the battle against slavery or in the recent struggle against

the gospel of force and frightfulness, that he seriously bethinks himself of his spiritual birthright.

As the gap widened between this fixed world of religio-political values and the actual social situation it was inevitable that there should arise a feeling of unreality, even of insincerity, in the conscience of the nation. This has been accentuated of recent years through the tremendous expansion of the industrial order and the rise of a social and economic structure never dreamed of by the men who formulated the political philosophy of the nation. Even before the outbreak of the war President Wilson was able to say, " This is nothing short of a new social age, a new era of human relationships, a new stage setting for the drama of life ". But even in the utterances of this clear-sighted and forward-looking leader we seem to have indications that he had not completely emancipated his thought from the inherent dualism of the American mind. We still seem to catch an echo of the old simple individualistic life of the small farmer, or the small shopkeeper, of unrestricted competition with its transcendental background of unalterable and inalienable rights. It has been remarked of the Mr. Wilson of 1913 that his ideal " is the old ideal, the ideal of Bryan, the method is the new one of government interference ". The problem of introducing homogeneity into our scale of values, made urgent through the rise of a new industrial order, has been accentuated of course a thousandfold through the great international catastrophe. Had the American people been schooled from the beginning to formulate their political ideals in close and vital contact with developing political experience, as is true of the English, had they been taught to give rational interpretation to the constantly accumulating mass of national experience instead of relying confidently upon the political faith " which was once for all delivered unto the saints ", we should not now be so helpless when faced with new and untried issues.

Disrespect for law is a much more serious consequence of this dualism. The average American has been schooled to believe in the majesty, the authority and the indefecti-

ble character of the principles of right embodied in his political symbols. He is, therefore, at once freed from any pressing sense of responsibility for their preservation. He holds them in the highest esteem and admiration, listens with all possible respect to the judicial interpretation of their subtle and hidden meanings. In actual life, in business or politics, however, he does not hesitate to take a "moral holiday", like a boy out of school, under the firm conviction that the eternal principles of the Constitution will keep watch and ward over the destiny of the republic.

The average American has thus come to view the law in two senses. On the one hand, we have the indefectible principles of righteousness and justice embalmed in the highest law of the land and expounded with august dignity and learning by the Supreme Court. On the other, we have the ordinary laws of the city and community in which one lives. The average American is intensely loyal to the lofty legal abstractions of the Constitution but too often the laws that hedge him about in actual life are viewed with distrust and even hostility. It is part of the game to circumvent them if possible. He does not associate with them much of his sense of loyalty to the beautiful abstractions of natural rights, freedom and equality.

Unfortunately, however, this immediate world of work and play, where rules exist but to be evaded, inevitably wins out in any prolonged contest with a world of eternal laws whether political or religious. For the world of fact is with us early and late. The constant impact of its petty details, its habits of action, is ever being recorded in human character and shapes the social conscience. The result is that a moral sense oriented in terms of ideals "too pure and good for human nature's daily food" soon loses its virility. We have thus a curious parallel between the decay of Calvinistic theology and the gradual discrediting of the doctrine of natural rights underlying the highest law of the land.

The unfortunate thing about this national double-mindedness is the disciplinary effect of the long years when the

masses of Americans, particularly in business, have devoted all their energies to the lower and materialistic things of life. The leaders of industry cannot live as though profitism were the supreme measure of values without in time building up habits of thought in themselves and in the community that are materialistic. Our present moral uncertainty is largely the result of our failure to make real in actual life the noble spiritual traditions we have inherited from our fathers. It is always increasingly difficult as the social process becomes more complex to keep clearly in mind our ultimate loyalties. The immediate problem of mastering the means, of perfecting the instruments for the attainment of the distant goal tends to monopolize our thought and effort. We become so enamored of the excitement and the exhiliration of the chase that we forget to ask whether the quarry is worth our pains. The business of merely living becomes more important than the ultimate end of life itself. We become so fascinated with the din and clatter of the machinery that we adopt its fiendish energy and mechanical determinateness as our measures of value. Gross output becomes more important in our eyes than richness and sweetness of human life. We forget, what the war has taught us with terrible emphasis, that the machine can do the bidding of the devil just as effectively and as impartially as it works the righteousness of God.

Most insidious and dangerous is the effect of this prevailing impotence of higher moral sanctions in its educative effects upon the community. The frequent failure of the reformer or of the instruments of law and order to cope effectively with social evils inevitably leads the average unreflective individual to look upon acts of violence, corruption, maladministration or what not as part of the tare and tret of the social process. The conscience of the average man is shaped by social experience until he becomes, though all unwittingly, an *advocatus diaboli.* It is a very easy transition from the habit of mind, for example, which is schooled to associate forms of vice with the massing of men in great cities to the attitude of mind which finds a necessary causal relation be-

tween these forms of vice and the intense commercial activity of our urban centers. Hence we have the oft repeated assertion that the "wide-open" town has a distinct economic advantage over the town with the "lid on". The political conscience of a community that has long suffered the demoralizing effect of being represented by corrupt political leaders has little difficulty in persuading itself that their corrupt methods are the price that must be paid to secure legislation that will insure business prosperity. The public sentiment may indeed so far lose its sensitiveness as to discount corrupt and questionable methods on the part of leaders because of their efficiency in the political game or their ability as statesmen.

Perhaps the strangest attempt of a social conscience, dulled by the bankruptcy of higher moral sanctions, to justify corruption is found in the argument that corruption is but a clever and necessary instrument through which democracy seeks to defend itself against the wild and untamed passions of ochlochracy. It is argued that the undemocratic capitalistic class has effectually alienated the proletariat and that without some mediating instrument the structure of our democracy would be disrupted through bitter class conflicts. The political boss with his machine steps boldly into the gap and by clever pandering to the demands of the unhappy and subversive proletariat prevents revolution and preserves at least the outward semblance of democracy. Thus corruption and graft are justified very much in the same way that *panem et circenses* were justified under imperial Rome. It need hardly be observed that such a justification of the ethics of the political boss is a cheap and unwarranted slander upon the character of a free people.

§ 4. Fact and Ideal

The most fundamental form of this dualism which we find running through American life is that between fact and idea, or between the immediate concrete situation in business and politics and the ideal. This dualism appears in countless forms. We see it in the contrast between the political

idealist and the "practical" politician. It emerges in education in the contest between the champions of culture and the humanities and those who like Gradgrind will have only "facts" and a technical equipment for a definite work in the social order. It is played upon with great skill by the popular evangelist who alludes to the scholar or the theologian as "an intellectual feather duster" and insists upon a religion of immediate emotional experiences and practical activities. It registers itself in the social reformer who resolutely turns his back upon the social theorist and muckrakes business or politics with the confident belief that the ultimate remedy of social evils is to "get the facts before the people". It is seen in the realm of literature in the willingness of the writer of the "best seller" to violate his artistic conscience and to debase his literary ideal in the zeal for a vivid and realistic portrayal of life.

The ideal first won articulate formulation in American life. The American nation was in the beginning little more than an ideal, a pious hope. Our great national confession of faith was really but "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". In the beginning the reality of national life was largely exhausted in this eloquent and enthusiastic declaration of political faith. The ideal and final character of this early formulation of political faith has given to Americanism a mystical, intangible atmosphere that enables it to defy time and space. American patriotism is not provincial or local like that of the average European. But for this very reason the national ideals have from the very beginning possessed a declaratory and an abstract character that has tended to divorce them from practical life. It was unfortunate that in the beginning the concrete social setting was largely lacking by means of which those who had professed their faith in the lofty ideals of the bills of rights and the Constitution could set to work upon the process of making these ideals real in the life of the nation. It lent an air of unreality to all political responsibilities. Hence, as has been remarked, "America, in spite of its materialistic phenomena, is as doc-

trinaire as can be imagined, and in an idealistic way; for it insists on an overpowering emphasis of early foundations of the national meaning, and then insists on these principles being carried out with a symmetry that is more logical than vital".

The emphasis upon the factual emerged later in the course of American life. It developed at a lower level, close to the pressing daily needs of men. It was inevitable that in the slow and arduous process of building up the material basis of a civilization Americans should be schooled to lay emphasis upon the facts. No nation of history has ever unfolded its life in such close contact with stupendous natural phenomena. The material problems presented by virgin forests, great rivers, vast mountain ranges and the pathless expanses of untilled prairies are without any parallel in history. These physical facts faced men in stubborn, naked, materialistic array, unrelieved by the glamor of history or myth, unsoftened by the touch of the poet and thus devoid of the subtle spiritual symbolism that centuries of association with civilized man lend to the phenomena of nature in Europe and in the Orient.

Out of this long struggle with physical facts has come the American worship of the man of action and the enthusiasm for "efficiency." Whether it be baseball, politics, education, or religion we prefer it with a "punch". We are blindly idolatrous of the men who "do things". Later perhaps we shall develop the critical powers, the lack of which at present often incapacitates us for distinguishing between the sheer, irrational, and wasteful expenditure of energy and activity that actually enriches and furthers human life. The present widespread acceptance on the part of many Americans of the supremacy of pecuniary values is a phase of this zeal for the factual. The average American pays homage to money not because of any intrinsic merit it may possess but because it is one of the most obvious and generally accepted indications of achievement; it is the seal of success in the long struggle with the material and the factual. In so far as

wealth, honestly gained, indicates mastery in this materialistic sense it must be granted that the popular pecuniary measure of values has its justification. With a deeper insight into the meaning of life money must give place to a more rational measure of values.

There is no more striking illustration of the slow encroachment of the factual upon the realm of the ideal than is offered in the field of education. The zeal for facts is evinced in the rapid growth of the natural sciences and later in the interest in economics and political science. In some of the older colleges where the traditions of earlier days are less exposed to the disintegrating effect of the utilitarian trend, humanism holds its own. But even here the time-honored humanistic studies have been forced to change their methods and points of emphasis so as to stress the factual, the social and the utilitarian. To a certain extent one must yield to the logic of the factual. For it may be seriously doubted whether any of the higher values associated with education, or with any other phase of the higher life, can take deep and permanent root except in a soil thoroughly prepared by the mastery of the immediate, the factual and the concrete. The crudity or even the materialism in American life, so often made a target for the shafts of European criticism, is a necessary and inevitable stage in the evolution of American culture. Indeed the honest courage and conscientious thoroughness with which as a nation we have faced this immediate task is no small earnest of the possible achievements of America when once her whole-hearted endeavor is directed toward the realization of the higher values of life.

Meanwhile it cannot be denied that preoccupation with the immediate and the factual has to a very large extent discounted the ideal as a dynamic factor in American life. As a nation we have to a large extent accepted the dualism between the ideal and the factual present in the beginnings of national life as part of the eternal order of things. We have not yet felt the imperative necessity of uniting the two. This has resulted in a gradual triumph of the factual for the simple

reason that it is ever with us. We are never able to escape entirely from the disciplinary effects of the brute facts as they impinge upon us from every angle of experience. They inevitably shape us to their will unless we are able to surmount them or make them instruments for the attainment of a more abundant life through the ideal. Perhaps it was asking too much of America to refine and spiritualize the crude ore as she dug it from the mine. But it remains true, nevertheless, that without some such process of refinement we shall never be able to distinguish the dross from the gold. The day is already far spent when we can justify our neglect of the duty critically to weigh and evaluate on the ground of the urgent call of the practical. The gap between the ideal and the actual must be closed. The confusions and contradictions in our highest ideals must be remedied in the interest of a sane and progressive national life.

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PART II

PSYCHOLOGICAL

CHAPTER VI

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MORAL SENTIMENTS

§ 1. The Limitations of Social Science

Nowhere are we so painfully aware of the limitations of exact scientific method as in the study of social phenomena. To insist upon anything approximating the exactness of natural science is to make of truth in things social at best a piecemeal affair, a collection of *membra disjecta*. To fall back upon the analogies of the poet or the insights of the philosopher is to lose touch with the pluralistic level of factual detail. Wholeness and reality are for the student of social problems largely overlapping terms. Every sociologist or social philosopher must be something of a realist in the scholastic sense. The *ens universalissimum* is the correlative of the *ens realissimum*. But to anaylze and explain is to disintegrate. Hence in the search for social verities we are constantly in danger of dissipating them, of making them intangible. To lose the whole point of view is to sacrifice part of the reality, for we are dealing with a situation in which the bearing of the whole upon a given part lends to the part both its meaning and its reality.

The social scientist, therefore, is particularly apt to be a worshipper of generalizations. The fascinating and infinitely complex problems he faces encourage a state of mind in which he fails to distinguish the scientific principle legitimately drawn from the facts from the generalization of the philosopher based upon insight. He often moves in a realm of half-lights

that is neither science nor philosophy. Here is the basis for the accusation often leveled at sociology that it is a pseudo-science or a half-hearted philosophy or both. Old philosophical terms are, to be sure, taboo. But it is by no means unusual to find a sociologist, after having properly damned the good old-fashioned metaphysician, proceeding to give us brilliant philosophical speculations of his own. The newness of the subject, its intense human interest, and the apparent concreteness of the terms used serve to conceal the essentially speculative character of his thought. By elevating his generalizations to the dignity of proven laws of society he is really guilty of the old, old fallacy of reifying abstractions.

Much has been done by the social psychologist to place the study of society upon a scientific basis. Certainly much of the futility of the speculations of social philosophers both past and present is to be traced to their ignorance of the fundamental psychological facts involved in the social situation. It seems best, therefore, to preface the more detailed discussion of the social conscience with a psychological analysis of the moral sentiments. We must keep in mind, however, the variety of the facts and forces concerned, their subtlety and difficulty of control, their close affiliations with the instinctive and habitual phases of experience, and especially their social character. We shall find that our task is not an easy one. The classical systems of traditional metaphysics, with their academic dignity, their remoteness from life and their logical finality are comparatively simple compared with the bewildering complexity, the tragic human interest and the sense of unplumbed depths suggested by the eternal social problem.

§ 2. Organization Fundamental in Character

Thanks to the accumulated facts of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, we have been made aware of the exceedingly complicated structure of the moral experience and of its more or less adventitious character. We now know that the simplest moral sentiment presupposes a long process of organization and evolution in the group and in the individual. Or-

ganization and development rather than intuition or revelation provide us with the key to the moral problem. Impulse, instinct, emotion, sentiment, ideal are not separate entities. They are functions of character, forms, and phases of the activity of a feeling, reasoning, and willing creature. They emerge, therefore, only as organically related to a living whole. Any mechanical or purely analytical explanation of the moral sentiments and their constituent elements can only furnish us with a set of empty and useless abstractions. We cannot reduce character to a set of ultimate and persistent elements like the stones in a mosaic or the bricks in a building.

Character is in fact a *complexio oppositorum.* Every system of sentiments tends to develop penchants that further that system and these penchants often persist after the systems of sentiments which created them have disappeared. Hence the mature character presents at best a strange melange of tendencies, habits, bedraggled and half-forgotten ideals. Courage and cowardice, nobility and meanness, sincerity and deceit, open-mindedness and constraint, dwell under the same roof-tree, often in a strange and apparently unholy concord. So successful is life in imprinting upon the human heart its own inherent contrarieties, its persistent paradoxes. The classical moralists, the theologian as well as the social scientist, have been more or less unaware of the inherent complexities of human nature because their attention has been directed to the logical and institutional formulation of the moral life rather than to the process by which this formulation has been attained. They have ignored, therefore, the slow and painful evolution whereby, partly through reason and partly through wasteful trial and error, men have succeeded in organizing their moral experiences. In our study of the moral sentiments it seems fitting, therefore, that we should begin with the principle of organization.

Organization is perhaps the most inveterate and outstanding characteristic of all living things. To be sure, we may predicate organization in a sense of inanimate nature but it is mechanical, disinterested, inert. The organizations and dis-

integrations that are constantly taking place in the entire sweep of the mechanical cosmos, from a dewdrop to a solar system, are apparently indifferent to the question of possible loss or gain of moral values. Only in the imagination of the poet or the mystic do the winds of the night or the stars in their courses groan and travail together with man in his moral and spiritual struggles. The unmorality of nature is apparently vast, unequivocal, inarticulate, absolute. Organization among living things, however, differs fundamentally from the mechanical organization of nature. For the living thing is interested in its own self-preservation, in the continuity of its existence, in the satisfaction of its interests. With the emergence of life value comes to have meaning and reality in the world. The indifference of inanimate nature disappears. Existence becomes vastly more interesting, more dramatic, because of the presence of things that can suffer and enjoy.

Organization is presupposed at the very beginning of mental evolution. "Indeed we seem to have no evidence of anything growing into a system in the course of mental development which was not a system at the outset". One of the marks of the pre-rational elements of character is that they to a certain extent already form a system and seek a definite goal; otherwise they would not be able to find a place in a more comprehensive organization. A typical illustration of this at the beginnings of the mental development is found in the rise of voluntary control. The babe is equipped at birth with a number of motor coördinations which are for the most part random and spontaneous and poorly executed. But this imperfect hereditary equipment forms the nucleus for further organization extending to the larger muscles first and finally to the more delicate adjustments of the smaller muscles.

Thus, at first unconsciously and later consciously, the mental life manifests the fundamental tendency to grow through organization. The process continues as long as conscious life lasts. It exhibits the very spirit and intent of all conscious activity. The amused child is content because its

toys, games, or what not, provide material for the insatiable demand of the mind for organization. Enforced idleness or aimless activity is torture to the alert individual because of the dearth of material for the organizing activity of the mind. For the same reason the impulsives and the hystericals who represent the lowest types of character are more frequently the victims of ennui because of the incapacity for sustained mental activity due to the lack of organization.

The highest and most intelligent form of organization, and hence the completest expression of life, is found in human character. The principle of organization, therefore, provides us with a criterion not only for placing character in the scale of being but also for the evaluation of character itself. For the most highly organized characters are the most perfect and possess the greatest social value. It is possible to classify characters according to the degree and type of their organization. Thus in the balanced character we have an organization of instincts, emotions, and sentiments without any pronounced preponderance of any one element. There is rather a harmony of strong and well developed tendencies which balance each other and form a unified ensemble in which no one sentiment or emotion dominates to the extent that it destroys the general harmony. In the unified character, on the other hand, there is not so much a harmony which results from the balance of equal tendencies as the subordination of all the tendencies under one master passion. In other types of character, such as the reflective, the nervous, the constrained, the emotional, the tranquil, and the like, we have still other phases of organization; the list is all but inexhaustible. In the impulsive character, the lowest type of all, the principle of organization seems to be violated entirely. But even here organization still obtains. For the partial disintegration of personality in the neurotic is really due to the fact that the higher systems of sentiment are supplanted by lower systems of emotion, which are partially isolated and function as independent selves.

The organization of the moral sentiments presupposes,

therefore, the presence of simpler and largely innate systems, such as the instincts and emotions. These are also the results of a long process of evolution and organization, the instinct being largely a chain of reflexes. When these primary systems are further organized around objects or ideas we have a sentiment, the most comprehensive phase of the self. The sentiments, it will be observed, differ in important respects from reflexes, instincts, and emotions. They are not innate but are developed through contact with our fellows in society. The sentiments are of fundamental concern, therefore, for all ethical problems. For they condition the character of the individual and form the texture of the social order in so far as it is really moral and human. Without sentiments we should be at the mercy of the impulsive and short-sighted systems of emotions. Life would be chaotic, inconsequent, futile. The sentiments furnish conscious direction for appetite and desire; they provide our measures of value in art, religion, morals, and civic life; they function as the element of control in every moral judgment.

§ 3. Constituent Elements in Character

McDougall defines an instinct as "an inherited or innate psycho-physical disposition which determines its possessor to perceive and to pay attention to objects of a certain class, to experience an emotional excitement of a particular quality upon perceiving such an object, and to act in regard to it in a particular manner, or, at least, to experience an impulse to such action". The instincts, which have been called the "cosmic roots" of character, exhibit afferent, central, and efferent phases corresponding to the cognitive, the affective and the motor phases of consciousness. The reaction to the sight of an automobile suddenly rounding the corner and bearing down upon a pedestrian as he crosses the street involves first the perception of the machine, then the inner affective thrill of feeling, and finally the muscular movements connected with escape from the danger. Of these three stages the first and the last admit of indefinite modification while

the second or affective element is fixed and permanent. The affective experience aroused by the sight of the machine does not differ in quality from the affective element in the fear of hell-fire. But the means that have been used during the past centuries to arouse this fear of hell-fire and the provisions men have taken to avoid hell-fire have varied in a thousand ways and differ widely from the simple act of perception and the muscular movements in the case of the automobile.

Intimately associated with the instinctive systems, among which McDougall distinguishes as most important flight, repulsion, pugnacity, self-abasement, self-assurance, the parental instincts, and curiosity, are emotional systems, likewise innately related to each other and possibly to the instincts. The seven primary instincts, just named, have, according to McDougall, the emotional accompaniments of fear, disgust, anger, subjection, elation, the tender emotion, and wonder. Shand, however, insists upon a more plastic interpretation of these elementary systems of instincts and emotions. An instinct, Shand contends, may be excited without the accompanying emotion. The systems of primary emotions, he contends, are not, as McDougall implies, merely the effective aspect of an instinct. The emotions are systems more or less independent of the instincts and embody in their systems those instincts that are congenial and reject those that are not. Hence, Shand contends, instincts can be excited without emotional accompaniment and the same instinct may become related to different emotional systems. In unstable and neurotic temperaments these emotional systems become relatively independent. In melancholia, for example, the emotional systems of fear or sorrow dominate the personality.

The power to build up emotional systems is a spiritual liability as well as an asset to man. Emotional systems centering around sensational stimuli, where the hereditary associations are strong, are seldom abnormal. But emotional systems associated with *idées fixes* tend to disturb the balance of personality because they are not controlled by the higher systems. The emotional life of the animal is safeguarded by

the fact that its emotions are aroused only through sense stimuli that are innately connected with the emotion. Through ideas and mental images man is able to separate the emotions from their hereditary stimuli. An emotional system may, therefore, become a wandering star in the mental firmament unless brought under the control of the sentiments. There are apparently three stages in the evolution of the emotions. At the lowest level, shared by man with the animals, the emotions are inseparable from certain fixed sensational stimuli. Later the emotions become disengaged from this hereditary setting and threaten the unity of the mental life as is seen in the neurotic. In the highest type of personality the emotional systems are thoroughly integrated in the comprehensive systems of sentiments from which they draw their meaning and purpose.

The sentiment is the most comprehensive phase of character organization. It has been defined as "an organized system of emotional dispositions centered about the idea of some object". A sentiment is, therefore, not so much a distinct entity in the mental life as a way in which the mind functions by virtue of its organization. The sentiment is eminently teleological in that it finds its unity and coherence in the end it seeks. It tends for that reason to subordinate to its end the minor ends of the lower systems of emotions and instincts. Hence we may have the rather paradoxical situation in which the same instinct or emotional system constitutes a part of systems of sentiments that are opposed to each other. The Frenchman's love of country is apparently opposed to his hatred of Germany. But an examination will show that the emotions of fear, anger, sorrow, and joy, or the instincts of fight, repulsion, curiosity, and the like will be constituent elements in both systems of sentiments. Love of country embraces fear when her welfare is menaced, anger when she is insulted, sorrow at her sufferings, the impulse of fight when her rights are endangered. Likewise, the hatred of Germany involves the emotion of fear at her power, anger at her cruelties, sorrow when she triumphs, and the instinct of fight when

she oppresses the weak. It is important to remember that the character of the emotion or of the instinct involved is determined not in terms of its inherent structure or quality but in terms of the end sought by the sentiment of which the instinct or emotion is a part. It is the end sought by the sentiments of patriotism of the German and the Frenchman rather than the emotional or instinctive elements entering into these sentiments that determine their ethical significance. This is a principle of fundamental importance for our understanding of the part played by the sentiments in the moral life.

The unification of the complex systems of instincts and emotions in the sentiment is secured through ideas. For " The idea taken in the usual sense of the word as something that is stored in the mind, may be said to be the essential nucleus of the sentiment, without which it cannot exist, and through the medium of which several emotional dispositions are connected together to form a functional system ". These ideas may be associated with things such as the flag, a relic of a saint, the Declaration of Independence, or the sword of Washington. The loftier sentiments are centered around abstract ideals such as freedom, democracy, love of God or of the truth.

The key to the understanding of the structure of the sentiments, therefore, is to be found in the relation of abstract ideals to the lower, relatively permanent systems of emotions and instincts. The ways in which these lower systems can be combined and recombined in weaving the fabric of the self are limitless. These lower systems may be compared to the sounding-board, and the ideas through which they are combined in the systems of sentiments to the key-board, of a grand piano. When a virtuoso renders a complicated musical masterpiece the structure of the sounding-board is not materially altered. Just as marvellous tonal effects are made possible through the skilful manipulation of the mechanical combinations of the key-board, so character is but the rationalizing and socializing of emotion and instinct through ideas.

§ 4. The Structure of the Moral Sentiments

We have now to ask what are the implications of the foregoing analysis for the structure and functioning of the moral sentiments. It is obvious that a moral sentiment is differentiated from the other sentiments, such as the religious or the aesthetic, not so much by the quality of the emotions or the instincts that compose it as by the ends it seeks. The unity and purpose of a moral sentiment is secured through some ethical norm or ideal that serves to organize feeling and instinct. The public indignation aroused by the political grafter or the profiteer is of course a complex mental state composed of instincts, feelings, mental images of persons and situations together with abstract ideas. But this state of mind takes on a moral character only in so far as the complex elements are unified and interpreted in terms of some general norm of conduct which men feel has been violated. In other words, the concrete instance is subjected to a moral judgment, the predicate of which is an habitual organization of the moral sentiments of men. What lends this norm or ideal its compelling power and effectiveness is the fact that it is shared by all the good citizens of the community. It is an integral part of the social conscience. For the efficiency of the social conscience of a community is obviously a matter of the vigor and the uniformity of the organizations of the sentiments of individuals in terms of principles that make for civic righteousness.

In this connection an interesting problem arises as to the relation between a system of sentiment as a whole and the general principle or norm that serves to give it unity and purpose. Do the unifying ideas create the sentiment in the sense that they first suggest a definite end around which the more or less chaotic elements of the lower systems gradually arrange themselves? Or shall we say that the ideas are the products of the system as a whole in that they are selected to meet the demands of the system or arise out of the effort of the system to give intelligent interpretation

to what it seeks? It must be confessed that up to the present stage of social evolution pure reason has played a rather subordinate rôle. It has been asserted that " only where emotions are organized in sentiments, and subordinated to their central control, are the higher powers of the intellect developed ". For " all intellectual and voluntary processes are elicited by the system of some impulse, emotion or sentiment, and subordinated to its end ". The facts seem to indicate, therefore, that, while the norms or general principles give direction to a sentiment, they are at the same time the expression of the system of sentiment as a whole. The relation is an organic one. Scientific truth, social justice, freedom, democracy, and the like have meaning and driving power for us only as they are thoroughly embedded in some powerful system of sentiment. That is, they have no meaning apart from or independent of the systems of which they are parts. They always mean in immediate experience just what the warm, pulsating systems of sentiment of which they are parts demand they shall mean. This explains why our interpretations of such abstractions as truth or justice vary according to the character of the system of sentiment of which they are parts. It is a familiar fact that " truth " as part of a system of religious sentiment and as part of the sentiments of the scientist means widely different things and the difference is determined exactly in terms of the ends sought by the two different types of sentiments concerned. The ethical difference between the saint's love of God and the miser's love of gold is not a matter of the psychological factors concerned but of the ends sought by the sentiments as a whole.

Every sentiment, then, tends to create its own scale of ethical values. Those ideas that are in harmony with the end sought by the sentiment are welcomed and embodied in the system of the sentiment. Those ideas that are antagonistic to the sentiment are rejected. This discrimination between ideas seldom has anything to do with their scientific value or their objective truth. The *odium theologicum* aroused by Galileo's helio-centric astronomy and later by the theories

of Darwin was not interested in the scientific value of these theories. The unpardonable sin committed by these new ideas was that they did not harmonize with the prevailing systems of religious sentiments organized around the older scientific ideas. Powerful sentiments are essentially intolerant, dogmatic, self-satisfied; for them whatever is is right. Freedom of speech was impossible in the slave-holding South. There is in fact no more subtle and dangerous enemy to democratic liberties than just this intolerance born of the mastery over men of some one powerful and yet one-sided sentiment.

Every well-developed system of sentiment also exercises a sort of selective power over the emotions and the instincts. That is, every system of sentiment inclines to favor those emotional states or instinctive attitudes that further its ends and rejects or discounts those attitudes that tend to defeat its ends. The sentiment that directs the search for scientific truth selects and stresses such qualities as patience, fortitude, the courage of conviction, open-mindedness, impartiality, freedom of thought and speech, and is more or less antagonistic to the tender emotions and to the gregarious impulses which would tend to dissipate the attention. The strenuous competition of the life of business is liable to build up systems of sentiment that accentuate the instincts of fight and of acquisition while neglecting the tender emotions such as sympathy. The instincts and emotions connected with curiosity and play that form the roots whence spring the choicest flowers of civilization in art, literature, and science are crushed by warlike sentiments. The disciplinary effect of militarism upon the organization of the social conscience is for this reason most dangerous. In industry the selfish and militant sentiments encouraged by the struggle for profits leave no place for the tender emotions which would help secure justice to the child-worker or the unemployed.

Owing to their autonomous and self-sufficient character the sentiments, especially where they are vigorous and thoroughly organized, tend to introduce the element of relativity into the

moral life. It is a familiar fact that the mother's love for her child, the miser's greed for gold, or the saint's enthusiasm for the kingdom of God, tends to create in the lives of these persons measures of moral values that are often downright anti-social. May it not be said, therefore, that the more definitely the sentiments are organized in the life of the individual the more they tend to defeat the moral ideal? Is not every sentiment, to a certain extent at least, immoral? It was La Rochefoucauld who said, "Les passions ont une injustice et un propre interêt, qui fait qu'il est dangereux de les suivre, et qu'on s'en doit défier, lors même qu'elles paroissent les plus raisonnables".

§ 5. The Rôle of the Moral Sentiments

This brings us face to face with the distinctive rôle that the moral sentiments play in the life of the individual in contrast to other sentiments. The moral sentiments are to a large extent sovereign among the sentiments. When sane they do not exhibit the inherent injustice of other sentiments because they do not deal with private or selfish ends. The moral sentiments are organized around norms that deal with the character of the individual as a whole or with the welfare of the community as a whole. For this reason the moral sentiments furnish the cement that holds the structure of human society together. They play a similar rôle to that of the norms of physical hygiene that insure the health and continuity of the life of the body. A completely immoral individual or social order would perish of sheer incompetency and maladjustment. The universal and categorical nature of the moral sentiments is to be understood in the light of the rôle they play. Society cannot admit of argument or of wide diversity of view when the essential conditions of human welfare are at stake.

Because of their fundamentally important rôle the moral sentiments do not hesitate to sit in judgment upon other sentiments, as in art and religion. A fundamental violation of the rubrics of ethic in a work of art can never be offset by

inherent artistic excellence. Loftiness and intensity of religious devotion are never accepted by the masses of men as substitutes for the good, old fashioned virtues of intellectual honesty, courage, or the spirit of fair play. This explains why society as a whole is far more vitally interested in the creation of the sentiment of honesty in the average man than in the building up of a general belief in the historicity of Jonah or of the apostolic succession. Both these moot religious questions have from time to time formed the center of vigorous religious sentiments, but society on the whole is convinced that its welfare is not vitally dependent upon the cultivation of such sentiments. There is a profound truth in the dictum of Nietzsche that religion is constantly being shipwrecked upon morals. An enlightened social conscience has slowly rid us of witch-burnings, Spanish *auto-da-fés,* the Puritan Sabbath, and heresy trials.

It would be a mistake to imagine, however, that the moral sentiments, even in the case of that tested body of sovereign ethical principles identified with the social conscience, are fixed and absolute. Thinkers such as Plato and Kant have sought philosophical justification for the doctrine that the moral sense is the reflection in human life of an indefectible and eternal moral order. The facts of social evolution go to show, however, that moral sentiment at any given period is never a clear-cut and logically ordered body of ideas and feelings. It is a complex composed for the most part of the residua of previous stages of evolution, fragments of partially disintegrated sentiments, traces of ancient loyalties not yet entirely abandoned, compromises necessary to maintain social equilibrium. The public sentiment that composes the social conscience is, therefore, only partially rational. It owes its structure for the most part to the stresses and strains of the social order and to the necessity of affecting some sort of adjustment between the various groups of society. Its effectiveness, however, depends in increasing measure, in our close-knit modern life, upon the ability of the individual to think in terms of comprehensive ethical catagories. The very bewildering com-

plexity of the social order is constantly increasing the demand for a body of thought-out ethical norms.

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CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

§ 1. The Rôle of Group Consciousness

In a famous passage in the *Republic,* Plato insists that no group, even the most anti-social, can exist without a minimum of morality necessary for its own self-preservation. "Nay more," says Socrates in his observations as to justice among thieves, "when we speak thus confidently of gangs of evil-doers acting together, this is not strictly true, for if they had been perfectly unjust, they would have laid hands upon one another; but there must evidently have been some remnant of justice in them, or they would have injured one another as well as their victims, and they would have been unable to act together; they were but semi-villainous, for had they been whole villains, wholly unjust, they would have been wholly uncapable of action".[1] This is merely a paradoxical way of stating the fundamental truth that a certain amount of homogeneity of sentiment, resulting in a measure of coöperation and adjustment of contending forces within the group, is a condition pre-requisite to the persistence of the group's life.

Suggestions of the social conscience are to be discerned in the various manifestations of the gregarious impulse among the lower animals. Indeed it has been claimed that it is through "the consciousness of kind, as a determining principle, that we are to seek the explanation of all social organization among the gregarious animals and man". To lump together in this way all the complex group phenomena, from the behavior of a school of mackerel to the actions of a group of citizens seeking social reform, under the blanket term "consciousness of kind" has been called "the climax of descriptive vague-

[1] *Republic,* p. 352, Jowett's translation.

ness". Nevertheless, we can detect in certain differentiations of the gregarious instincts of the lower animals at least anticipations of the social conscience in man.

Darwin called attention to the fact that social instincts or those immediately concerned with the preservation of the group are more massive and persistent than the egoistic instincts. For this reason, the social impulses tend to control the individual in the interest of the group. The migratory group instinct prevails over the maternal instinct of the swallow so that she deserts her young to follow the flock as it wings its way southward. The group impulse influenced a little monkey to assist his master attacked by a powerful baboon.[1] Galton's wild cow, separated from the herd, was restless and unhappy until this group-preserving instinct had reunited her with her fellows.[2] In the case of the savage, whose life is arbitrarily ruled by custom and tradition, conscience, in so far as it may be said to exist, is identical with a mass of sentiments and ideas reflecting the will of the tribe. The pangs of conscience felt by the individual when he finds himself at variance with these group feelings bear a very close family resemblance to the uneasiness of Galton's cow when separated from the herd. Darwin cites the experience of Dr. Landor, a magistrate of Australia, who was unable, even under threat of imprisonment for murder, to deter his black servant from yielding to the persistent demands of tribal loyalty requiring him to go to a distant tribe and spear a woman to satisfy his sense of duty to his dead wife. It would seem, then, that the *raison d'être* for all feelings of group solidarity is to be found in the necessity for the maintenance of a healthful and unbroken group life.

§ 2. Custom and the Social Conscience

In the case of man, however, these feelings of solidarity that make society possible become tremendously complex. The social conscience is only one phase of the mass of feelings that

[1] Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, pp. 125 f.
[2] *Enquiries into Human Faculty*, p. 48.

have been lumped together under the vague term "consciousness of kind". We have now to ask what is the relation between the social conscience and custom, law, public opinion, public sentiment, the social will, and similar phases of the social mind.

The social conscience and its cognate term public sentiment are for the most part differentiations of custom, the *fons et origo* of human society. Custom is the oldest and most comprehensive form of social control. It is called by Bacon "the principal magistrate of man's life". The relation of custom to law and morality is most intimate. It is thus stated by Wundt: "Custom, in the sense in which it is ordinarily used to-day, means a norm of voluntary action that is valid for a national or tribal society without enforcement by express command or by punishment for non-conformity. It is true that custom finds its own means of compulsion. But these, like custom itself, are never of the obligatory kind. They consist neither in subjective commandments like the moral laws, nor in objective menaces like the laws of the state. On the other hand, custom is related both to morality and to law; to morality, in having at its disposal a subjective, and to law, in having at its disposal an objective means of compulsion. The first consists in a natural dislike, closely akin to the imitative impulse, of making oneself conspicuously different from one's fellows; the second, in the social disadvantages—disparaging remarks or rough treatment—that follow upon any considerable deviation from the ordinary code of behavior. The fear of seeming peculiar affects a weak nature as powerfully as a bad conscience could do; and the real injuries consequent upon non-observance of a custom may be more keenly felt than the penalties with which the law punishes actual crime." [1]

One of the important differentiations custom underwent was that between ways of acting enforced by law and ways of acting enforced by public sentiment. This was brought about through the pressure of social need. For, obviously, as society grows more complex men will come to feel that there are norms

[1] *Ethics*, Vol. I, p. 151.

of conduct which are of fundamental importance for social welfare and hence stand in need of special authority for their enforcement. Theoretically, law covers these norms of conduct back of which there is unanimity of public sentiment and for the enforcement of which society is willing to make use of coercion. Custom and public sentiment as opposed to law deal with those norms that lie open to debate or which from the nature of the situation do not lend themselves to exact legal formulation or to physical coercion. Public sentiment, for example, may be fairly unanimous in its condemnation of a common scold but this sentiment is not of such a character that it can easily be reduced to law or supported by physical force.

After the elimination of the norms with legal sanction it is possible to draw another distinction among those norms that are left, namely, the distinction between those that are purely customary and those that are *obligatory* or contain a moral element. Customary action is voluntary in the sense that its authority does not depend upon express command and no definite penalty is attached to its violation. The power of custom is due primarily to the instinctive impulse to imitate, which is fortified by the gregarious and sympathetic tendencies opposing whatever sets us apart from our fellows. This, combined with the social inconveniences that arise through any marked deviation from the established code, lends to custom its compelling power. Through it groups, and even advanced societies, are held together with little aid from law and the formal instruments of the group will. This enables us to understand, furthermore, the strain placed upon a group or a community where the "cake of custom" has been broken and men are thrown back upon the necessity of formulating new ethical norms. Thereby reflective morality is made to carry the entire burden of social control. "Crisis" is the term that has been fittingly applied to such critical periods in the life of a people.

But there is within the large field of social norms not covered by the law many that are not merely customary but very clearly contain an ethical element. Neither custom, nor

law are as such moral, immoral, or unmoral. They may belong to any one of these three categories. But whenever a law or custom is closely related with matters of vital concern to the community, when either one touches the question of human values, it inevitably takes on a moral tone. For ethics deals with those norms that are of fundamental social import. Now there is in every civilized community a body of sentiment, relatively fixed and authoritative, composed of norms of conduct that are not purely customary and that are not completely embodied in law but that are recognized as of vital importance for the entire community. Fichte has in mind this phase of morality when he speaks of the "principles of conduct which regulate people in their relations to each other, and which have become a matter of habit and second nature at the stage of culture reached, and of which, therefore, we are not explicitly conscious. Principles we call them, because we do not refer to the sort of conduct that is casual or is determined on casual grounds, but to the hidden and uniform ground of action which we assume to be present in the man whose action is not deflected and from which we can pretty certainly predict what he will do". It is this body of authoritative ethical sentiment that constitutes the social conscience.

Obviously the customary has much in common with that phase of the moral dealt with by the social conscience. The social conscience, like the customary, is the product of the organization of the instincts and emotions around fundamental human needs essential to the life of society. Both custom and the social conscience are most pronounced in connection with institutions such as the home, the church, the state, or in connection with birth, death, war, sex. The social conscience, like custom, becomes strongly surcharged with emotion and feeling. For the emotions are the immediate affective accompaniments of the basal elements of character. In both custom and the social conscience the ideational element tends to be subordinated to the affective element. The general ideas or norms that find embodiment either in social conscience or in custom owe their power over men not to their logical coherence nor to

their scientific value so much as to the compelling force of the systems of sentiments of which they are parts. Finally, custom and social conscience are largely the results of the more or less accidental stresses and strains of the social process. Their character is determined in terms of the demands of the given stage of social evolution for stability and balance of social forces.

But, while closely related and having much in common, custom and the social conscience are not identical. For in the customary act we yield to the pressure of social habit without any feeling of obligation. In the moral act the important thing is the sense of the ought. In the conventional or customary act there is no reflection upon the social significance of the act or its relation to the character and previous acts of the agent. In an ethical situation there is more or less critical reflection upon the entire situation and the bearing of the act upon society and the lives of the others. This is particularly true of individual morality. For here ethical problems of a unique and personal nature arise, for the solution of which there is no convenient and ready-made ethical norm. " Cases of conscience " often require a critical revision of ethical norms to fit the new situation. Even in the case of the social conscience there is often more or less critical analysis and recasting of old ethical standards. There is this important difference, however, that the social conscience is much more a matter of tradition, of inherited social standards, of the accidental demands of adjustment to the larger social order. Furthermore, the problems of the social conscience are usually more remote. They rarely touch the individual's life at first hand. Too often they are solved by the hasty and uncritical application of broad generalizations of popular philosophy that may have become embedded in the moral sentiments of the average man.

It is possible, then, to define the social conscience in general as that body of comprehensive ethical norms that are integral parts of the moral sentiments of the members of the group, that enjoy unchallenged authority, that function almost

automatically in the settlement of ethical issues, and that insure the continuity and the integrity of the group's life. Functionally, the social conscience manifests itself in the emphasis placed upon certain forms of behavior, certain types of character, and the condemnation of their opposites. The social conscience, therefore, is to be distinguished from the intimate and personal phases of the moral experience that are unique. For the social conscience is concerned only with the broad and comprehensive ethical categories by means of which the individual orients himself upon the issues that have to do with social justice and civic righteousness. Obviously these larger moral categories are intimately associated with the institutional forms that safeguard communal or national welfare. The social conscience is, in fact, the subjective correlative in the minds of the members of the community of that objective balance of wills that finds expression through a well-ordered, institutional life. To be moral is, as Hegel said, to be suckled at the breast of the universal Ethos.

§ 3. Characteristics of the Social Conscience

The previous discussion has made it possible perhaps to state more accurately the characteristics of the social conscience. It must be remembered, first, that there is no such thing as an objective, organized body of ethical sentiment independent of individuals. To speak of the social conscience as "corporate ethical sentiment" is, therefore, figurative only. The social conscience is individual in residence and social in function. It relates to those phases of the ethical sentiments that deal primarily with social problems. It is concerned with those norms that make possible group action upon ethical issues. The conscience of the primitive man was practically all social conscience. In the second place, the social conscience is characterized by the conscious use of ethical norms for the preservation of group welfare. Hence arises the awareness of the authoritative rôle of the social conscience towards all phases of the community's life. Hence also the conscious reference to public welfare. This regard for human values in the larger

sense is what distinguishes the social from the individual conscience. The individual must, of course, if he pushes his analysis far enough, raise the question of the common good in the effort to solve his own ethical questions, but, as a rule, he does not.

It is, therefore, when appeal is taken to the comprehensive ethical norms recognized by all as necessary to the preservation of the common good that social conscience is active. In the case of the prohibition movement, for example, whenever the members of various groups consciously apply commonly accepted ethical norms, used by the average man when asked to define the ideal conditions of social well-being, the issue becomes an ethical one. It is of course obvious that intensive thinking along religious, economic, political, and even æsthetic lines in regard to the liquor evil or any other great social wrong will bring us ultimately face to face with these comprehensive ethical norms of human well-being. The ethical character of these norms, as has been repeatedly suggested, is due to the fact that they prevent social waste and friction, they eliminate unhealthful and unnecessary clash of human wills, they safeguard the rights and capacities of many-sided human nature, they insure the intelligent and beneficial perpetuation of social forms and institutions,—in a word, they made possible in so far as they are intelligently applied a self-conscious and sanely balanced society. They make for the solution of the social problem.

The social conscience is essentially disinterested. There is a sense of course in which all moral sentiment is disinterested. But it will hardly be denied that the individual whose conduct is inspired by broad principles of social justice is more disinterested than when he is trying to solve an issue of private morality. Conduct is disinterested when it is stripped of the immediate, egoistic elements. Or, to state it in other terms, conduct is disinterested when it is actuated by principles that include in their scope the highest human values. Disinterestedness was long thought by the psychologists to be a matter of the altruistic impulses. Spencer for this reason was inclined

to give to the altruistic impulses the last word in the eternal argument between egoism and altruism. McDougall asserts that Christianity owes much of its power over the hearts of men to the fact that it emphasizes the home and the family, institutions based upon the sympathetic and tender emotions so important at the higher level of civilization. In reality, however, any sentiment is disinterested not because of its instinctive or emotional content but because of its end. The disinterested sentiment of patriotism may include the so-called egoistic elements of anger, acquisitiveness, pugnacity, sorrow, and the like. The end sought by the sentiment as a whole lends to its constituent elements their ethical character.

The disinterestedness of the social conscience is found, then, in the fact that it organizes instinct, emotion, and impulse into comprehensive systems of sentiment that are concerned with the larger and more permanent human interests. Social justice, civic righteousness, efficiency in public service, industrial democracy, sensitiveness to the sufferings of the weaker or oppressed groups, enlarged conceptions of social responsibility, these are the elements that serve to give point and direction to a progressive public sentiment. They include those great ethical norms which more than any other subordinate the individual and his rights and ambitions to the welfare of the whole. Disinterestedness is often identified with impersonality and with a measure of truth. But the ethical ideal can never be entirely emptied of concrete content. The eternal personal element is always present. The very impersonality of a disinterested social conscience is but the emphasis of the universal human phase of the personal. Where the impersonal element is falsely and artificially divorced from the concrete personal setting it tends, strange to say, to degenerate into unregulated and even anarchistic individualism. It has been pointed out that ethical nihilism similar to that of Nietzsche underlies Emerson's doctrine of the over-soul.[1] To orient one's life in terms of remote and ideal abstractions in practice often en-

[1] Shaw: "Emerson as Nihilist," *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 25, pp. 68 ff.

courages moral anarchy for it is equivalent to setting adrift upon an uncharted sea. The over-soul, translated into action, may mean a lawless and self-assertive individual soul.

In so far as the social conscience is rational and purposive, however, it must subordinate the concrete and the individual to the abstract and the universal. Indeed the social conscience is only possible because men have the power to organize their feelings and emotions around general principles such as social justice, honesty, civic pride, human welfare. This means that the judgments of the social conscience are not pronounced in terms of the concrete, definite, and highly institutionalized sentiments connected with group or private interests. The predicates of its moral judgments are provided by the common sentiments that gather around more or less abstract and disinterested conceptions of social righteousness. Where the members of the community think in terms of narrow and selfish sentiments that get their "set" from business, church, party, or family interests, public spirit is impossible and a sensitive and efficient social conscience is an idle dream.

Two things, then, are indispensable to a vigorous social conscience. The first is enlightenment and the second is a dynamic social situation which forces men to do their thinking on ethical problems in comprehensive and more or less abstract terms. For the social conscience is concerned primarily with the objective phase of morality. It is composed of those general ethical norms that men are forced to frame because of social issues and social contacts. The social conscience will be most articulate and self-conscious, therefore, in a social order in which men are compelled to pay constant attention to the larger social situation or, in other words, where the social tends to obtrude itself more and more into the private and personal. This necessity for formulating and applying general norms is of course most in evidence in a social order where custom and tradition are unable to meet the situation. It is particularly felt where there are always marginal areas of moral experience that are not covered by law and ethical traditions, where conflicts are ever arising demanding reflection and the weighing

of interests. The great increments to ethical thought have always come as a result of reflection and analysis made necessary through social changes and the discrediting of traditions, a typical illustration of which was the Athens of Socrates.

A vigorous social conscience obviously makes great demand upon the moral imagination. It only exists, therefore, where there is an advanced stage of enlightenment. The best ethical ideas of an age are never the possession of the average man. They are living realities only in the refined and highly organized sentiments of moral leaders. The average man, especially in a dynamic society, shares in this higher realm of ethical insight but only because he takes the great moral leader as his guide. For these subtler values are objectified in the personality of the leader and thus find their way through suggestion and imitation and the countless avenues of social contact into the moral life of the community. Lincoln has furnished moral "social copy" to Americans for over half a century. The demands upon the moral imagination of the average man are increasing constantly. The abstract idea is becoming more and more the basis of social relations. We are living in the organic phase and the sins and social injustices of which we complain can be seen only with the mind's eye.

§ 4. The Social Conscience and the Virtues

It should be obvious from the foregoing analysis that the social conscience is closely connected with the idea of virtue. Broadly speaking, virtue is the term we apply to some phase of character or habit of will that is recognized as having social merit. According to Aristotle, moral virtue is not something implanted in us by nature but is the outcome of habit or, in modern parlance, of the organizations of the sentiments. Men gain this habit by acting in certain ways in society. "The virtues we acquire by first exercising them, as is the case with all the arts, for it is by doing what we ought to do when we have gained the arts that we learn the arts themselves; we become, for example, builders by building and harpists by playing the harp. Similarly it is by doing just acts that we become just,

by doing temperate acts that we become temperate, by doing courageous acts that we become courageous. The experience of states is a witness to this truth, for it is by training the habits that legislators make good citizens." [1] The virtues, then, sum up those phases of character that are recognized by all members of the community as of special importance for the maintenance of a healthful social life.

As it was in democratic Athens that social self-consciousness first reached an advanced stage of development, so it was there that thinkers first tried to classify the virtues or socially valuable phases of character. Aristotle's catalogue includes such qualities as liberality, high-mindedness, magnificence, wittiness, and friendship, all held in high esteem in ancient Athens. But the outstanding virtues are courage, temperance, wisdom, and justice. Both Aristotle and Plato conceived of these phases of character in a highly rationalistic fashion. Courage, for Aristotle, is the mean between foolhardiness and cowardice, temperance the mean between licentiousness and insensibility. Reason or insight, therefore, is the determining factor in the shaping of a virtue. And yet even for Aristotle "the good of man is an activity of soul in accordance with virtue or, if there are more virtues than one, in accordance with the best and most complete virtue. *But it is necessary to add the words, 'in a complete life'.*" Evidently there was back of this phrase "in a complete life" the image of the Athenian city-state as the setting that determined these virtues. Hence Plato in his Republic, a sketch of the ideal state that is to make possible the comprehensive virtue of justice, really gives us an idealization of existing Athenian society.

Much of the formalism and lack of human interest that has characterized the traditional treatment of the virtues is due to the failure to recognize that virtues are really types or phases of the organization of the sentiments of the average man brought about by the stresses and strains of the social order in which he lives. It is true that more than any people of history the Greeks struck the universal human note in the arts and

[1] *Nicomachean Ethics,* Book II, Ch. 1.

formulated the enduring problems of philosophy. Hence it is possible to find points of similarity between the Aristotelian definitions of courage, temperance, wisdom or justice, and the prevailing ethical ideals of subsequent civilization. But it should not be forgotten that Athenian society has never been duplicated. The peculiar structure of the groups and communities that have lived since the fourth century B.C. have varied infinitely. Hence the structure of the social conscience of every age and more or less of every nation must necessarily be different. Variations of political, religious, economic, or social emphasis will tend to bring those virtues or organizations of the moral sentiments into prominence that harmonize with the demands of the social structure while discrediting other virtues that do not harmonize.

It is most instructive to contrast the structure of the social conscience of Athenian society reflected in Aristotle's classification of the virtues in the second book of his Nicomachean Ethics with the structure of the social conscience of the early Christians as reflected in their writings. It will be found that in the latter the virtue of high-mindedness is subordinated to that of humility; magnificence and liberality, which presuppose an ethical evaluation of great wealth, disappear while poverty is stressed; the civic virtues of courage and justice make way for passive attitudes of meekness, forbearance, gentleness, charity; the intellectual virtues of wisdom, sagacity, and the like are discounted entirely. It is impossible to understand this almost complete transvaluation of values without keeping in mind the totally different setting, social, political, and economic that effected such a striking difference in the organization of the social conscience of the early Christians.

After the rise of institutional Christianity that brought the priest and the sacrament into the center of the stage and made them the dispensers of spiritual truth and power, and after the formulation of the great creeds such as that of Nicea in 325, it is possible to detect another shifting of ethical values in the social conscience. We now find that the so-called Christian

virtues of faith and love are made fundamental in character. It is only after regenerating faith has touched the springs of moral power and made possible the life of love that the individual is able to cultivate effectively the virtues of temperance, wisdom, courage, and justice. In the mind of as great a thinker as Augustine the virtues of Aristotle were all but discounted; they had no merit in and of themselves. For him the virtues of the pagan, that is of the unregenerate soul, were "gilded vices". Later in the famous *regula* of St. Benedict of Nursia (circa 530 A.D.) we have an outline of a most elaborate group life designed to surround the monk with a social discipline that would give to his moral sentiments a form of organization in which humility holds the highest place among the virtues. With the advent of Protestantism a social discipline arose, the tendency of which was to create another type of social conscience and another scale of moral values. Lecky has shown how the rise of an industrial society has tended to emphasize the virtues of veracity, order, sobriety, thrift, while diminishing the virtues so prized in the middle ages, namely, reverence and humility.

It should be plain from this brief sketch that there are no fixed norms of the social conscience that persist the same from age to age. The so-called virtues of the moral theorist are in reality variable terms, purely formal concepts. They give in broad schematic form the outstanding characteristics of the organized moral sentiments of every age. There is no classification of the virtues that is final. What we have is an ever-changing mass of moral sentiment that is being molded to fit the needs of a social order that is never static. With the shifts of emphasis, the redistribution of the stresses and strains, comes a change in the moral emphasis. The virtues are after all comprehensive norms that men find indispensable for the solution of the eternal social problem. These norms cannot possibly be any more permanent than the human order that gave them birth.

This does not mean that the moral life is essentially relativistic. The social conscience presupposes continuity of social

traditions. The ethical generalizations of the social conscience cannot be viewed as merely the results of the needs of one given stage isolated from the past. Ethical norms arise as part of the social process and are related both to the future and to the past. They are organically connected with the past and yet they do not grow out of it by strict logical sequence. They look to the future and yet they do not anticipate in its entirety the nature of the ethical ideal as it will take shape a decade or a generation hence. Our present formulation of the ethical ideal derives its concrete content from the conflicting interests concerned in the immediate social order. We depend upon the past for perspective and the critical estimate of the values concerned. The particular application we are to make of the formal ethical norms to modern conditions and the content of the norms concerned are problems our age together with every other age must solve for itself.

The ideal toward which society moves with blundering steps is one in which all the members of a given stage of the social process shall set themselves the common task of adjusting intelligently their differences in terms of clearly defined authoritative ethical norms. It is hardly conceivable that the social conscience should ever be brought under rational control and direction to the same extent that this is possible in the case of the individual conscience. But we may hope for a far closer approximation to the purposefulness and continuity of the individual conscience than now exists. And of this we may be sure, in that direction alone lies society's hope for social peace, the elimination of friction and the stoppage of the incontinent waste of human values.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE (*Continued*)

§ 1. The Rôle of Ideas in the Social Conscience

Dicey describes the content of the social conscience as "a body of beliefs, convictions, sentiments, accepted principles, or firmly-rooted prejudices, which, taken together, make up the public opinion of a particular era, or what we may call the reigning or predominant current of opinion". This diversity is more apparent than real, for upon examination we find that this complex content is knit together by an ideational framework of maxims, principles, uncritical generalizations drawn from every sphere of experience, religious, economic, political, or social. A strong emotional tone inseparable from social habits also serves to cement illogical and heterogeneous bodies of ideas into the persistent and powerful systems of sentiment that orient the individual on the great practical issues of life.

The ideational element in the social conscience is composed usually of those generalizations that enter into the popular moral philosophy of an age or group. Rarely are they logically coherent. They are merely the general assumptions or principles that everyone recognizes and follows. The social conscience is a sort of informal *Weltanschauung* of an era. It is the moral world-view of the average man. It may include popular theories as to nature, society, trade, the state of religion. Fundamental in the social conscience of the man of the middle ages, for example, were the assumptions as to the authority of the church, the divine right of kings, the geo-centric astronomy, and the unquestioned acceptance of miracles, witches, and devils. Any or all of these might under certain conditions affect the deliverances of the mediaeval conscience upon moral issues. Tens of thousands of innocent victims were burned at the stake with the sanction of institutionalized

Christianity and treated as the very moral offscourings of the earth because of cruel and superstitious beliefs embodied in the social conscience.

Even in modern times the purely abstract and theoretical issues raised by the advances of science often take on for the orthodox soul an intensely ethical tone. To apply evolution or the methods of scientific criticism to the Bible appears to many good people essentially immoral. Undoubtedly one serious hindrance to the passage and enforcement of scientifically framed laws on eugenics or the investigation of such matters as birth-control is found in the serious offense given to the moral sensibilities of the average man. Thus the peculiar structure of the prevailing systems of moral sentiments may defeat a law that is wise and scientific and necessary to social progress. The verdict of the social conscience, even though based on prejudice or ignorance, is final.

Superficially considered, this arbitrary and uncritical application of the assumptions of the social conscience to issues as they arise appears irrational, often cruel and unjust. An examination of this apparent irrationality, however, will give us a deeper insight into the nature and function of the social conscience itself. The social conscience, as we have seen, owes its existence primarily neither to logic nor to science but rather to the practical needs of the community for a continuous and well-balanced communal life. Hence the value of general principles that happen to become embodied in the social conscience is judged in terms of the extent to which they further, or are thought to further, the existing order of things. These general principles were once taken up into the social conscience just because they happened to be of value in solving the problem of group adjustment and not because of their absolute or inherent worth. No creed or political platform is drawn up primarily with a regard to logic or the scientifically tested principles of religion, economics, or politics. Hence, the sheer accumulations of social inertia, the uncalculated and unexpected stresses and strains of an evolving social process, catch and embody in

the structure of the social conscience much that appears only flotsam and jetsam, gathered helter-skelter from earlier stages of development. But the actual attainment of social equilibrium at a given stage of evolution seems to justify the presence and the value of all the constituent elements of the social conscience just because they, like the stones in an arch, apparently contribute to the existing balance of social forces.

The test of the validity of the geo-centric astronomy for the man of Galileo's day was found not in the scientific principles concerned but in the intimate and organic connection of this astronomy with the life and thought of the mediaeval man. It provided the cosmic setting for that noble epitome of the thought of the middle ages, the Summa Theologiae of Aquinas; it furnished the astronomical symbols for the superb flights of the poetic imagination of Dante; it served to orient the movements of God, angels, men, or devils on earth, in heaven or in hell; it was presupposed in the great redemptive scheme that included the entire sweep of nature from the dewdrop to the remotest star; it was carved in the enduring stone of the Gothic cathedral; it was portrayed in the gorgeous stained glass windows or painted on altar pieces; it rendered articulate every word and gesture and thought of daily life; to challenge it was to threaten chaos to that close-knit system of social, ethical and religious norms that hedged about the life of the man of the middle ages. It meant, in a word, to destroy the social equilibrium that had been the slow and patient creation of centuries of human effort. In a sense Galileo had committed the unpardonable sin for he threatened to disintegrate that unity of thought and experience without which every form and semblance of morality was impossible.

In modern times we have more and more divorced the content of the social conscience from the tenets of theology or the conclusions of exact science. But when a principle of economics or politics or religion becomes firmly embodied in the social conscience of a group or of an era and comes to play a part real or imagined in the preservation of the *status quo* it invariably takes on an ethical tinge. The doctrine of states'

rights abstractly considered is a matter of political philosophy rather than of ethics. When, however, in the course of time it became an integral part of the mass of moral sentiments that gradually arose in connection with the "peculiar institution" of the South its significance became primarily ethical. For the abstract principle of state sovereignty had taken its place as a constituent norm in that form of social conscience necessary to the perpetuation of the type of group organization represented by the slavocracy of the South. Much in the same way the tariff issue, which in reality is purely a theoretical problem of economics and is so treated in other nations, has taken on for the average American a certain moral character. The intensive organization of economic and social interests of certain sections around the dogmas of high protection has transformed the economic principle of protection into something very like an ethical norm.

A practical inference from the foregoing discussion is that as society becomes more complicated, more richly freighted with human values, we cannot leave the organization of the social conscience to the haphazard forces of the social process. The fulfilment of the moral ideal and the attainment of the most progressive and efficient type of society involves first and foremost the intelligent organization of the social conscience and secondly the ability to apply moral principles consciously and efficiently to the issues as they arise. The great principles of democracy, of social justice, of scientific truth, of religious inspiration, or of æsthetic charm must be incorporated in the social sentiment of the future. Means must be devised for making these things part of the deeper life of the individual. There must be first a process of social education and discipline through the institutional setting, and secondly training in self-expression and initiative. The two cannot be separated. For we shall find that the problem of disciplining the social conscience is inseparable from the problem of securing effective means for its expression. The group or the individual whose powers of self-expression have been starved and neglected will in time develop indifference toward public ques-

tions. It is but a step from indifference to atrophy and impotence of the social will.

The problem of enlightening and disciplining the social conscience is a slow one. It is not to be confused with the comparatively easy task of informing and guiding public opinion upon some issue of passing interest and importance. Only by a very gradual process does an idea become part and parcel of the moral sentiments of the masses and that through processes in which conscious reflection plays a relatively small part. A principle becomes embedded in the social conscience only through a long process of suggestion and imitation, through the disciplinary effect of social institutions and a way of life. The enthusiasm that stirred millions of American hearts in the great crusade to make the world safe for democracy was not born over night, the creature of a world-war of unparalleled cruelty and atrocity. It is but the expression of habits of thought, organizations of sentiments that presuppose generations of contact with free democratic institutions. The great loyalties of a people are a slow growth, like the oak of the forest, but they are our refuge when the storm breaks.

§ 2. Some Tendencies in the Social Conscience

What are the problems of the social conscience due to the peculiarities of our modern American life? There is no doubt that much of the impotence and sluggishness of the social conscience that we find so discouraging arises out of inherent and inescapable difficulties in the social situation. There is in society no transcendental "enigmatical self", that presides, as in the case of the individual, over all the various systems of sentiment, criticizes and evaluates them, and elects between the various ends they propose. What we have is rather individuals and groups of individuals with strongly organized sentiments. Social action is usually the resultant of the more or less conflicting ends sought by individuals and groups. The social will, therefore, can never be as effective as the individual will, since no group or social order is ever a unit in the sense that the individual is. Two things, then, stand in the way of an efficient

social conscience, the diversity of individuals and groups owing to different social disciplines, and the lack of any comprehensive social institution that will dominate all other institutions and insure unity of sentiments and an effective social will. The social conscience apparently is something that must be created over and above other loyalties and often in opposition to them in the interest of the social welfare.

This inherent difficulty arising out of the nature of the social situation is increased by the growing complexity of our modern life. The "mental pattern" of the sentiments of the average American is by no means as simple as that of the savage or even of the Americans of a hundred years ago. The unparalleled diversification of human life and the endless multiplication of the forms of social organization are registered in the structure of the sentiments of the individual. Hence we no longer have those broad institutional points of view due to church or party so familiar in the past. These persist, to be sure, but they are rivalled by countless other forms of social activities which tend to divide the loyalties of the individual. The problem so far as efficient social action is concerned is to secure some sort of unification of all these loyalties so that the community can depend upon the moral support of the individual in its efforts to solve its problems. The moral uncertainty noted in an earlier chapter is to be traced largely to this confusing and dissipating effect of our complex and inchoate society. The very vigor and self-assertiveness of individual men or institutions are often a menace to the larger sense of social and national solidarity and destroy the community's sense of the relation of values.

It is possible to note several hopeful tendencies shaping the social conscience to-day. Foremost among these is the increasing refinement of the moral sensibilities. It is a curious and interesting fact that the higher sensibilities of men have not advanced at an even pace. One has only to read Benevenuto Cellini's autobiography to see how in the men of the Renaissance the most delicate and refined æsthetic sensibilities could dwell side by side with cruelty and vindictiveness and a sin-

gular obtuseness as to the fundamentals of morality. John Locke, the author of the treatises on government from which Jefferson and the framers of the Constitution drew their lofty ideas as to the inalienable rights of men to life and liberty, also framed a constitution for the province of Carolina in which he expressly sanctions the institution of slavery. John Calvin did not find his devotion to a sovereign God, the essence of whose nature is love, incompatible with the *odium theologicum* that led him to permit the burning of the Spanish scholar Servetus because he denied the doctrine of the Trinity. It would seem indeed that the ethical sentiments are the last to reach a stage of refinement commensurate with that already attained in art and religion.

Since the middle of the last century, however, the refinement of the social conscience has progressed by leaps and bounds. About the middle of the seventeenth century a friend wrote John Winthrop, "A war with the Narragansetts is very considerable to this plantation, for I doubt whether it be not sin in us, having power in our hands, to suffer them to maintain the worship of the devil, which their pow-wows often do; secondly, if upon a just war the Lord should deliver them into our hands, we might easily have men, women, and children enough to exchange for Moors (Negroes?) which will be more gainful pillage for us than we conceive, for I do not see how we can thrive until we get into a flock of slaves sufficient to do all our business, for our children's children will hardly see this great continent filled with people, so that our servants will still desire freedom to plant for themselves and not stay for the very great wages. And I suppose you know very well how we shall maintain twenty Moors cheaper than one English servant."[1] Contrast this curious mixture of religious bigotry and Yankee shrewdness with the lofty idealism aroused in New England just two centuries later by the abolition movement. There is no more interesting evidence of the growth of an humanitarian ethic in modern England than the social legislation that has been enacted during the last few decades.

[1] Moore, *History of Slavery in Massachusetts*, p. 10.

Similar legislation in this country, the most noteworthy perhaps in connection with child labor, indicates a like increased refinement and sensitiveness of the social conscience.

The increased secularization of the social conscience is another evidence of advance. The time was when the social conscience, especially at its highest levels, was formulated almost entirely in terms of religious dogmas. Religion to-day still furnishes for many men the ultimate sanctions through which they seek to justify their efforts after social justice. But this group is in the minority. As a rule, the initiative in moves for social reform or civic betterment has passed from the hands of institutionalized Christianity. The great mass of moral sentiment that must be appealed to when paramount issues arise in the community is essentially secular rather than religious. We are not concerned here to examine the forces that have brought about this shifting of the moral center of gravity from the church to the community. The change was necessary for the liberation of the social conscience. It had to be emancipated from an institution that was becoming more and more departmental in the social order. It is well to bear in mind, however, that the modern secularized ethic is not necessarily opposed to the spirit of the Christian ethic. Many of the ideals that inspire the modern socially-minded man have been absorbed directly or indirectly from the Christian ethic. The Christian ethic only seems to be superseded because its elements of enduring worth have become the commonplaces of our modern ethic. Whatever alienation between church and society has arisen is due to the ever-widening gap between the socialized and secularized modern conscience and the narrow traditional ethic that arose in the past and persists unchanged behind the sheltering walls of ecclesiasticism.

Perhaps the most interesting phase of the modern social conscience is the struggle between the individual and the social point of view. We have to do here not with two fundamentally antagonistic factors but rather with the question of emphasis. The dominant individualistic ethic of the past meant simply the organization of the moral sentiments in a social setting

which laid the chief emphasis upon the rights of the individual and his powers of initiative. But even the most rampant *laissez faire* ethic presupposes social institutions, social contacts, and the molding influence of a social process without which morals would be impossible. The evils of individualism do not arise from an inherent antagonism between the individual and society. They are due to the over-emphasis of one phase of a totality which we can only separate into the individual and the social in thought.

The present distraught state of the social conscience is largely due to the conflict between the "set" given to the sentiments of man by the individualism ingrained in our traditions and institutions and the newer ethic born of a sense of the solidarity and mutuality of human interests. This clash is seen in the sphere of political ethics where the champions of a socialized democracy are arrayed against the old, law-made, individualistic democracy of the courts and the Constitution. It is exhibited in the jealous cry of business individualism to the government investigator, "Let us alone". It has even emerged in outworn religious form in the revivalist's emphasis upon individual salvation. It has been pointed out that there is a spiritual kinship between the reign of evangelicalism in England of the early part of last century and the economic and political individualism of Bentham and his followers.[1] We have a modern recrudescence of individualistic Evangelicalism in this country in Rev. W. A. Sunday, who draws his crowds for the most part from the conventionalized middle class where the old individualistic traditions have offered the most stubborn resistance to the social point of view.

So far as we can anticipate the present drift of social sentiment the tendency is to reëvaluate the individual in terms of a growing sense of the interdependence of a closely knit social order. This transformation of our conception of the individual bids fair in the end to affect fundamental concepts such as democracy, property, and the like. Men are beginning to realize that rights are not absolute or arbitrary, indefeasible

[1] Dicey, *Law and Public Opinion in England*, p. 399.

God-given franchises of the individual, but are immediately dependent upon the place and function of the individual in the community. Justice is not a matter of superinducing upon a changing social process inflexible legal forms that are supposed to be the final formulations of unalterable rights. Justice is the very real and human problem of evaluating, utilizing, and rewarding capacities and services in terms of a common good. Democracy is ceasing to be a struggle to realize an impossible egalitarianism. It is becoming more and more the application of the principle of equality of opportunity in order thereby to select out the socially valuable individuals and assign them to positions of responsibility and power. Equality has ceased to be the goal of democracy and has become a means to an end; it is society's necessary instrument for assuring to itself that inevitable individual inequalities shall serve the good of all and further a dynamic and progressive society.

Most encouraging of all perhaps in its bearing upon the problems of the future is the growing sense of social self-consciousness. We may distinguish at least three levels in the social mind. We may use that term in the broadest sense as including all the thoughts, feelings, or sentiments of all the members of the community, that is all those mental possessions which have been or may become the property of any member of the community. In a narrower sense the social mind might refer only to those ideas that are shared by all and which are known to be shared by all. This is illustrated in that stage of public opinion where men are discussing public issues and are at the same time aware that all the other members of the community are thinking of the same thing. There is finally the dynamic stage of the social mind when these ideas shared in common are made the basis of communal action at the polls or elsewhere. It is evident that the larger the mental content which all the members of the community consciously share, the greater is the social self-consciousness and the better equipped is the community for dealing with its problems. For consciousness in all forms, individual or social, is an instrument for controlling the life process and adjusting the organism to its

environment. The growth of social self-consciousness means, therefore, increase of the community's power to control the course of its development.

With the growth of social self-consciousness inevitably the community will bring to bear upon its problems in a much more intelligent and comprehensive fashion the mature moral sense embodied in the social conscience. Instead of confining the play of the moral judgment to individual or group interests men will come to include the larger problems of society. This will involve, on the one hand, an increasing sensitiveness to the fact that certain general moral convictions are shared by all and are felt to be of vital importance for all, and, on the other hand, the enlargement of the classes of objects to which these common ethical principles of social righteousness are applied. For the problem of securing an effective social conscience is not so much a matter of creating entirely new ethical categories wherewith to solve the issues of a new social order as it is the problem of expanding and socializing the ethical content of previous social experience. In an enlightened and progressive community the intellect plays over the various social issues and, on the basis of a keen appreciation of their relations to social welfare, arrives at a moral evaluation of them through the application of tested moral experience of the past.

Finally, we have every reason to believe that the recent world struggle will add to the social conscience of the future the international or cosmopolitan note. The age of the world has at last arrived when it is not only possible but imperatively necessary that we should embody in the moral sentiments of the humblest citizen the old Stoic dictum: *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.* For this great ideal is now no more a matter of sentimental humanitarianism but of immediate and practical statecraft. The social consciences of the nations must be reorganized in terms of the common interests and ideals of a family of nations before we can hope to realize Kant's dream of " perpetual peace ". The new internationalism of the future must be based upon the organization of the sentiments of the private citizen.

§ 3. Types of the Social Conscience

What should be the ideal form of the social conscience in a democracy? It is possible to distinguish types of social consciences just as we distinguish types of character. The strong character is the result of strong and thoroughly organized sentiments. Sometimes one sentiment dominates all the others and becomes the " master passion " in the individual's life. These furnish favorite types for the literary artists, illustrations of which are the sentiment of ambition in Cardinal Woolsey or of avarice in Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet*. Strength of will is a matter of the strength of the sentiments. " In the sentiments alone are resolutions formed, and choice manifested between their sometimes conflicting ends; they only give the will to control emotion, and to be steadfast unto the end. Strength or weakness of will, other things equal, varies with the strength or weakness of the emotion or sentiment to which it belongs; and hence it is that we find the same man strong in some directions and weak in others . . . every strong sentiment has a tendency to develop a strong will in its support." [1]

Social groups and even nations illustrate similar traits of unity and forcefulness owing to the disciplinary effect upon the average man of some dominant phases of public sentiment. The solidarity of sentiment created by the slave-owning South owing to the disciplinary effect of her " peculiar institution " created a unity and effectiveness of the social will which enabled that section to maintain a position of power in the nation far beyond its real importance. The presence for half a century of millions of emancipated negroes in the same section has brought about another unification of sentiment in the white group in the " color line." All issues, political, educational, moral, or religious that fail to harmonize with the demands of this powerful system of sentiments are rejected. The unity of national will that has made Germany such a formidable antagonist in the war just ended is due primarily to the complete unity of sentiment which, thanks to Prussian statecraft, was secured

[1] Shand, *Foundations of Character*, p. 65.

through the identification of the sentiment of patriotism with the ambitions of an unscrupulous military beaurocracy.

It has been pointed out that a fruitful source of weakness in individual characters is due to the fact that the lower systems of emotions emancipate themselves from the higher systems of the sentiments and assume control. This is especially true in the case of persons of hysterical temperament. We have here in reality a partial disintegration of personality. Lower, imperfect, and irrational selves usurp the rôle of the true self. Something very similar to this often takes place in American society and it is always an indication of moral immaturity due to the absence of an intelligent and highly-organized social conscience. "There are many lines of evidence which converge in proof that we are still an emotional people. We are an empire with varying measures of economic and social development in the different parts. We are civilized and barbarous at the same time. We have millions of primitive black men and more millions of primitive white men, both native and foreign born. We have Kentucky and Kansas and Colorado, and then we have Massachusetts. But not to speak of the contradictions of localities, there are not wanting indications that the mental mode of our entire population is still emotional. The churches in which feeling, belief, and authority are dominant have by far the largest membership. The 'solid' South as well as certain 'solid' portions of the North bear eloquent testimony to the reign of prejudice instead of independent thought in politics. The feuds in the Southern mountains, the lynchings of black men and white on both sides of Mason and Dixon's line, the mob spirit in industry, attest the rule of impulsive social action over great numbers of men." [1]

This large amount of undisciplined emotion in American life has been a fruitful source of moral laxity. We may distinguish two types of this unregulated emotionalism. In mob violence we have as a usual thing the temporary usurpation of the rôle of the social conscience by lower irrational and highly-emotional systems of feeling. There is evidence to support

[1] F. M. Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, pp. 299 f.

the contention that in certain sections of the country social habits have been developed through the constant yielding to these lower anti-social systems of instinctive feeling, especially in the case of lynching and mob violence. Davenport calls attention to the fact that the three adjacent counties of Kentucky, Logan, Simpson, and Todd, which contain one-fortieth of the total population of the state and one-sixth of the lynchings during the last twenty years, are also the counties in which the wildest emotional excesses occurred during the famous religious revivals of 1800. During the early part of the last century these counties were the scene of fierce and bloody feuds. Here we have a striking evidence in this coarser type of emotionalism of the lack of a mature and self-controlled moral sentiment. There is no more painful evidence of the lack of a sensitive social conscience than the fact that it is almost impossible to secure the conviction of the lyncher in those sections where lynching has become a social habit.

Another illustration of the moral immaturity of the social conscience and of its lack of poise is found in fanaticism. The lack of moral balance in the fanatic is not due, as in the case of the exponent of the lynch-law, to a surrender to the lower, irrational emotional system. More than often the fanatic orients his moral loyalties around ideas that are abstract, unreal, sometimes extravagant, and fantastic. His lack of moral balance is due to his moral hyper-sensitiveness. " Fanaticism frequently originates in acuteness of the moral sensibilities. Many, with or without hyper-suggestibility, seem too sensitive to endure contact with human life; to them are abhorrent the follies, sins, vices, and crimes which co-exist with the highest civilization yet attained. They have an almost irresistible tendency to make their own consciences the test of the sincerity and honesty of others. When the darkest side of social and political life is suddenly revealed to one of these acutely sensitive spirits, educated in the bosom of virtue and refinement, it may transform him into a misanthrope or arouse him to a conflict with evil, soon to become the most rampant

fanaticism." [1] Puritanism has provided us with some excellent illustrations of religious fanaticism while the classic illustration of the political and social fanatic is John Brown, the hero of Harper's Ferry.

The very idealism of our American life has made it possible to breed the fanatic. Carlyle has remarked, " A man once committed headlong to republican or any other transcendentalism, and fighting and fanaticizing amid a nation of his like, becomes as it were enveloped in an ambient atmosphere of transcendentalism and delirium ". This was written of the excesses of the French Revolution but it describes in extreme form the menace that is always associated with devotion to lofty and inspiring and yet ill-defined loyalties. The fanatic is a protest against the failure of the social conscience to seize on these lofty spiritual values and make them real in the lives of men and women. He needs the discipline of an effective social conscience hardly less than the moral Philistine he condemns, for he lacks the moral balance and the sobering sense of reality that only an efficient social conscience can give him.

We should expect, then, the most socially valuable type of individual as well as of society where we have a well-balanced system of sentiments. In the balanced character, which was the ancient Greek ideal, we have an organization of instincts, emotions and sentiments without any over-exaggeration of any one element. Unity of personality is achieved through the harmony of strong and well-developed tendencies which hold each other in check. No one human capacity is atrophied in the interest of another. This equilibration of powers in an individual varies indefinitely according to the individual. We may find it in the conventional average man who eats, drinks, sleeps, goes to his office, and spends an evening with friends, preserving always the even tenor of his way. We may find it in the genius. Each ability, whether of the genius or of the man of mediocrity, finds its place in an equilibrated whole, just as each must find his place in a social

[1] James M. Buckley, " Fanaticism in the United States," *The Century*, Dec., 1903, p. 197.

order that expresses in its balanced system of group and individual wills the larger social phase of what is illustrated in the individual.

There is much to be said for the thesis that the ideal society is one in which we have a real and intelligent and yet dynamic unity due to the balance between various group interests. The ideal social conscience would be that organization of public sentiment which gives most effective expression to the rights of these contending interests. The ideal social conscience, like the ideal work of art, must illustrate, therefore, the principle of unity in the midst of diversity. Social equilibrium, in so far as it can be asserted at all, is the conscious creation of the moral sentiments of the community. A balanced and healthful social life depends directly upon the constant alertness of this mass of enlightened public sentiment. Where a balance of contending forces takes place without the guidance of the self-conscious social will it must be reckoned as the accidental product of irrational forces beyond the control of man. The problem of the social conscience, therefore, is ultimately the problem as to whether a society is rational and moral in part, as a whole, or not at all. And our test as to whether in any given set of social phenomena the rational and moral are present must be sought in the evidences of the adjusting and equilibrating activity of the social conscience.

It will be objected that this definition of the social conscience is purely formal, another of the innumerable illustrations of sociological philosophizings. It must be confessed that the facts supporting such a conception do not always lie on the surface. Many immediate and outstanding social phenomena seem to indicate diversity, confusion, even irrationality. The social process often seems to move forward with all the wasteful, headlong stupidity of a herd of stampeded cattle. It may indeed be seriously doubted whether human society is ever, even for one short period of time, either entirely rational or moral. There are, to be sure, moments of spiritual illumination when men see life steadily and see it whole. Even this rare privilege is reserved apparently for the choicer spirits. In

society as we know it there are forces here and there making for righteousness; there are also other forces making for evil. Beyond these, the kingdom of conscience, lie vast reaches, ruled by the mechanical forces of nature, inert, non-committal on moral issues, but providing a huge cosmic setting to the drama of human life.

These are the things that make us modest in our claims for the social conscience. It may very well be that it is part of an eternally perfect and closed system of cosmic righteousness and that the very stars in their courses fight with us for the triumph of the right. This, however, must always remain a matter of faith, not of scientific investigation. For our immediate intents and purposes the social conscience is human in origin and purpose. We have no evidence that without the strenuous and unceasing efforts of human wills it would continue to exist. The practical question of its reality and value is a question as to whether men are courageous enough to assume and maintain the rôle of sovereign moral creators in the universe.

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CHAPTER IX

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

§ 1. Some Definitions of Public Opinion

The term public opinion is notoriously vague. This is doubtless due to its comparatively recent origin. When Bryce speaks of the "opinion", unspoken, unconscious, but not the less real and potent that has existed from the earliest times, he evidently has in mind the mores or quasi-self-conscious public sentiment found at every level of human society. It is part of the object of this chapter to point out the confusion that arises from identifying this with public opinion in the modern sense. Government, even democracies, have been known from antiquity. But public opinion in the modern sense is hardly more than a century old. In 1820 Sir Robert Peel paid the following tribute to the rise of this new force: "Do you not think that the tone of England, of that great compound of folly, weakness, prejudice, wrong feeling, right feeling, obstinacy, or newspaper paragraphs, which is called public opinion, is more liberal—to use an odious but intelligible phrase—than the policy of the government? Do you not think that there is a feeling becoming more general and more confirmed—that is independent of the pressure of taxation, or of any immediate cause—in favor of some undefined change in the mode of governing the country?" American public opinion can hardly be said to have existed until it was called into being by the great fight for independence and the subsequent struggle to achieve national unity.

Yet writers now speak of democracy as "the organized sway of public opinion". They give us the impression that public opinion is a sovereign, mystical and yet thoroughly purposeful entity which presides over the destinies of free and democratic peoples. Cooley says, "The public mind, like a

careful farmer, moves about its domain, hoeing weeds, mending fences, and otherwise setting things to rights, undeterred by the fact that the work will not stay done ".[1] Bryce also tends to objectify public opinion when he describes is " as a pervading and inpalpable power, like the ether, which passes through all things. It binds all the parts of the complicated system together, and gives them whatever unity or aim they possess." [2]

President Lowell, having in mind the exigencies of representative government, understands by real and effective public opinion the result of " crystallizing a mass of shapeless ideas into the general public opinion required for constructive legislation and political action." And since this public opinion can never be entirely clear except where it is called upon to pronounce between definite alternatives in terms of a categorical " yes " or " no ", it follows that " election of representatives and public officers on somewhat artificial party lines is, in strict representative democracy, the only authoritative expression of public opinion ". Yet this same writer tells us in another connection that " the true conception of public opinion is not a sum of divergent economic interests, but a general conception of political righteousness on which so far as possible all men unite ".[3] President Lowell evidently uses the term public opinion in two senses. In one sense, it is fluctuating and occasional, the synthesis of " a mass of shapeless ideas " necessary for effective legislation or political action. In the other sense, it is a permanent and organized body of sentiment embodying a general conception of civic righteousness.

Godkin seems inclined to limit public opinion in the strict sense to the will of the electorate. It is the " consensus of opinion, among large bodies of persons, which acts as a political force, imposing on those in authority certain legislation, or certain lines of policy ". But the same writer recognizes the existence of public opinion much wider in scope and much more authoritative, " the popular belief in the fitness or

[1] *Social Organization*, p. 133.
[2] *American Commonwealth*, Vol. II, p. 276.
[3] *Public Opinion and Popular Government*, pp. 63, 92, 121.

rightness of something, which Mr. Balfour calls 'climate', a belief that certain lines of conduct should be followed, or a certain opinion held, by good citizens, or right thinking persons. Such a belief does not impose any duty on anybody beyond outward conformity to the received standards ".[1]

Dicey thinks " Public opinion itself is, after all, a mere abstraction; it is not a power which has any independent existence; it is simply a general term for the beliefs held by a number of individual human beings. If we are not to become the dupes of abstract conceptions, we must individualize them and fix our attention upon the thoughts and beliefs of men who have lived and worked, and whose ideas are known to us through their conduct, and their writings, or their biographies. We had far better think about Blackstone than about Blackstonianism, about Bentham or the two Mills than about Benthamism, about Sadler and Lord Shaftesbury than about the undeveloped socialism of the factory movement." Yet this same learned jurist closes his great work on English public opinion during the last century with this citation from Mark Pattison, " Deeper than opinions lies the sentiment which predetermines opinion. What it is important for us to know with respect to our own age, or to any age, is, not its peculiar opinions, but *the complex elements of that moral feeling and character in which, as in their congenial soil, opinions grow.*" [2]

All these writers are more or less impressed with the exceeding complexity of the phenomena included under the term public opinion. " There exists at any given time," says Dicey, " a body of beliefs, convictions, sentiments, accepted principles, or firmly-rooted prejudices, which, taken together, make up the public opinion of a particular era ". They also tend to recognize two phases, which, to be sure, can not always be sharply separated, but which on the whole play different rôles in the economy of the social mind. The one is concerned mainly with the higher, more plastic, and unstable level where there is an interplay of ideas, clash of opinions, and the more

[1] *Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy*, p. 185.
[2] *Lectures on Law and Public Opinion in England*, pp. 414 f., 465 ff.

or less conscious exercise of criticism. This phase we shall designate as public opinion proper. At a lower level we have stable and permanently organized masses of sentiments, embodying principles and ideas that are generally accepted by the average man. This phase is in reality the social conscience. It is the ethical phase of public sentiment. These two phases of the social mind have been suggested by the writers just quoted, though they fail to distinguish them accurately.

§ 2. Public Opinion and Social Conscience Differentiated

The social conscience is obviously closely related to public opinion. In public opinion, however, the cognitive element is more in evidence. Opinion is, as Milton says, "knowledge in the making". Lack of stability usually characterizes public opinion. This is in striking contrast with the fixed and habitual ways of thinking and feeling that appear in the social conscience. Social conscience differs from public opinion in definiteness, finality, settled conviction. Public opinion has its fads and fancies, its fleeting and superficial enthusiasms. The social conscience includes the cherished sentiments, the habits of thought, the ultimate loyalties that guide the average man when he is called upon to make decisions upon social issues involving an ethical element.

In general, the distinction is that between opinion and sentiment. Public sentiment includes the social conscience or those general norms of conduct that have been cemented into systems and are binding upon all. For it, rather than the more evanescent and untrustworthy public opinion, furnishes society's last court of appeal. Here are oriented the steady and yet powerful feelings that provide social poise. To be sure, feeling, even passionate enthusiasms, may be associated with public opinion. Waves of hysteria, upheavals of public indignation, often master American society with something like hypnotic power, but the spell is soon broken. The feelings associated with the social conscience are neither so radical nor so stormy. They burn, however, with a

steadier glow. They may be temporarily overmastered and forgotten. In time they reassert themselves. Their power lies in their persistency, their universality, and in the fact that they represent the accumulated and tested wisdom of the community. If the social conscience is differentiated from custom, on the other hand, in that it is the conscious application of the norms of social wisdom to great ethical questions, it is to be distinguished from public opinion, on the other hand, in that it includes the mature and unchallenged moral sentiment of the community. Confusion arises where there is the failure to distinguish between these two phases of the social mind.

There is a certain sense in which we may say that the social conscience antedates public opinion. For the permanent and habitual organizations of sentiments growing out of closely integrated group life were familiar phenomena long before modern public opinion emerged and became effectively self-conscious. "Previous to the American Revolution," remarks Godkin, "the opinions of leading men, of clergymen, and large landholders, were very powerful and settled most of the affairs of the state; but the opinion of the majority did not count for much, and the majority, in truth did not think that it should". Public opinion presupposes the social conscience just as the social conscience presupposes an earlier and undifferentiated stage of morality when thought and conduct were dominated by custom, taboo, and tradition. The quasi-rational social ends sought in custom and taboo have become more logical and purposeful in modern public sentiment. On the other hand, the permanent "sets" of thought and emotion that stand out so strongly in the powerful systems of social sentiments are closely akin to the earlier instruments of social control, the mores of primitive tribal morality. They now function in a much more conscious fashion as the predicates of judgments that are pronounced by the social conscience upon issues that are paramount.

The social conscience is more conservative than public opinion. To entertain sudden and radical changes is no part of its function. It is the conserver of values, the moral balance

wheel of the community. Where it is strong, self-conscious, and thoroughly organized we have a vigorous moral life. Where its autonomy is threatened by the interests of groups or where it is at the mercy of the endless cross-currents of an unstable social order, such as the American society of the beginning of the twentieth century, we may expect confusion and moral impotence. This is a serious handicap in an advanced democracy such as ours, for it amounts to discrediting in the field of morals the court of last resort. Because of this confusion all the vast stores of the accumulated moral experience of the past cannot be effectively utilized. Men are unable to see the bearing upon the moral issues of the present of the settled convictions of the past.

Public opinion is more immediately concerned with the ideas and the innovations of individuals. The social conscience represents the tested conclusions of the social order. Public opinion paves the way for the work of the social conscience. The ideas suggested originally by individuals are tossed to and fro at the level of public opinion and gradually undergo a generalizing process through which they become, though usually in softened and modified forms, constituent elements in the social conscience and function as principles in the predicates of social judgments. This does not mean that the social conscience is mainly the result of a critical evaluation of the content of public opinion and of the ultimate selection of what has permanent value. Other factors only partially rational are concerned, such as vocations, business interests, racial affiliations, home ties and training, the effect of dominant institutions such as the church or the state, and finally the blind pull and haul of the ever-varying forces in a growing social order only dimly conscious of what it seeks. As society becomes more self-conscious, however, public opinion will be in increasing measure the point of initiation for effecting changes in the moral convictions of a free democratic people.

The responsibility for the moral welfare of the community is carried by the social conscience rather than by public opin-

ion. This is to be inferred from the character and the function of the social conscience. It is composed of the tested wisdom of the community and of the race and is intimately associated with those institutions that safeguard vital interests, such as the home, the church, and the state. Among all the writers who discuss public opinion we find constant allusions to the social conscience or to the sentiments of the masses of men as constituting the source of social guidance. It must be remembered, however, that these sentiments are only moral in so far as the principles that are embedded in them are consciously applied to moral issues. The reflective element is present here just as in the case of public opinion; the difference lies in the fact that in public opinion the play of ideas is much freer. In the case of the social sentiments the ideational element is more or less subordinated, as we have already pointed out, to the general purpose sought by the system of sentiments with which it is integrally related. The ideas active in the social conscience are general in character and have been preserved because at some past stage of social evolution they have met a need. They are absorbed for the most part from the social milieu, though originally they may have been the creation of some individual. It is only after the individual's particularizations have become generalized that they secure a place in the social conscience.

The justification for the authoritative and responsible position of the social conscience lies in its rôle. It furnishes social control, provides a necessary check upon radical and subversive ideas, and makes possible the maintenance of a well-balanced social order. The social conscience, therefore, is more or less the sworn enemy of new ideas or innovations of all kinds, while an enlightened and progressive public opinion must welcome new ideas. Public opinion in a democracy must insist upon freedom of speech, of press, and of assemblage, as the rights that guarantee all rights of a free people. Here, then, arises an awkward conflict between a vigorous public opinion and the social conscience. For it is obvious that we cannot cultivate habits of thought that are ever analyzing ancient

loyalties and casting the fundamental principles of conduct into the melting-pot of critical analysis without endangering the very existence of those loyalties. The Greeks succeeded in habituating themselves to the critical attitude so thoroughly that when Paul visited Athens during the middle of the first century he still found that the chief interest of the frequenters of the market-place was to tell or hear some new thing. But may not the transitory character of the brilliant civilization of the ancient Athenians be due just to their inability to hold on to ancient loyalties while subjecting everything in heaven or on earth to the acid of criticism?

It would appear, therefore, that there is no severer test of the capacity of a free, enlightened, and progressive community to endure than just this ability to exercise the critical attitude at the level of public opinion, thereby eliminating error and lighting the way to social betterment, while at the same time maintaining a firm grip upon the tested wisdom of the past embodied in the social conscience. It is obvious that this exceedingly difficult task implies a measure of social poise, of keenness of insight, of intellectual fearlessness as well as of wise and mature habits of reflection. Bryce points out that Americans are still far from a solution of this, perhaps the most difficult problem of democracy. "They are a commercial people, whose point of view is primarily that of persons accustomed to reckon profit and loss. Their impulse is to apply a direct practical test to men and measures, to assume that the men who have got on fastest are the smartest men, and that a scheme which seems to pay well deserves to be supported. Abstract reasoning they dislike, subtle reasonings they suspect; they accept nothing as practical which is not plain, downright, apprehensible, by an ordinary understanding. Although open-minded, so far as willingness to listen goes, they are hard to convince, because they have really made up their minds on most subjects, having adopted the prevailing notions of their locality or party as truth due to their own reflections." [1]

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 293.

Americans as a class have divorced reflection too much from the fundamental realm of loyalties included under the social conscience. The average American entrusts to this lower, habitual, and traditional phase of the social mind, with its authoritative principles, the solution of most of his problems. He believes implicitly in the ability of public sentiment with its time-honored traditions, to meet the issue. Critical reflection is considered useless, even irksome. Inevitably this results in discounting the life of the intellect. The average man is not interested in free, unattached ideas as they emerge in public opinion and in the give and take of social contacts. He is too busy to subject them to criticisms and down in his heart he feels that this is not necessary. Public opinion, therefore, comes to lack dignity, seriousness, and sustained force. Hence the aimlessness, the wearisome pull and haul of stubborn unreasoning wills when, as in the economic world, great issues arise calling for fundamental readjustments of the social order. Men have not been schooled to say when great social conflicts arise, "Come now, let us reason together". It is primarily a matter of a strenuous insistence upon rights, an unreasoning application of the traditional ethics or prevailing group standards.

This mental attitude is rooted in the very spirit and genius of American institutions. For the men who drafted the Constitution, in seeking to safeguard the nation from the vagaries of a youthful Demos who had not yet acquired disciplined habits of thoughts, sought to relieve the average citizen of the burden of constructive thinking on public issues. Thus the Constitution and the courts came to be more or less the keepers of the social conscience of the nation. For the Constitution was thought to embody eternal principles of political and social righteousness which it was the function of courts and learned judges to apply to the solution of social ills. Public opinion, therefore, as a free, intelligent and constructive force, was handicapped. Men were not made to feel the need of critical and creative thought. The great field of public opinion fell a victim to fads and fancies, to waves of futile

and often irrational popular enthusiasms. For this reason it too often lacks poise and self-conscious purpose. It does not have the dignity and force that can come only with the consciousness of great tasks to perform. It is the ready victim of the spell-binder or the faddist. It delights in the humbug, especially if he is master of his art and can deceive skilfully and with a sense of humor but does not feel the insult to its honor and intelligence of the mountebank in politics, religion, or morals.

By thus divorcing public opinion and the social conscience we have injured both. The social conscience has tended to become reactionary because shot through with prejudices and antiquated principles in religion, business and politics that cannot stand the fire of scientific criticism. Hence the social conscience often wastes its energies on unimportant issues. It is mightily aroused over divorce scandals without having any clear grasp of the fundamental social and economic changes of which divorce is but the external manifestation. It stands bewildered, amazed, even pained at the discrediting of ancient religious loyalties without any comprehension of the advances in scientific and philosophical thought that have produced these changes. It is scandalized at the frank and fearless discussion of sex hygiene and the insidious social evil because it lacks any real and intelligent insight into the bearings of these matters upon human welfare. Hence an ignorant social conscience often repudiates valuable scientific truth that should be placed at the service of the community in its eternal fight against crime, ignorance, incompetency and the deadly blight of a smug and self-satisfied Philistinism that is the sure sign of a decadent civilization.

Likewise public opinion, when divorced from the social conscience, tends to become flippant, careless, even cruel. It rebels at the irksomeness of thought because it has not been made to feel either the duty or the dignity of reflection. It lacks moral earnestness because it does not realize that only through the sober and critical analysis of problems are principles gradually formulated that in time must find

expression in action. Only the stern discipline derived from facing and solving new issues, from devising constructive programs, from being made to feel that the intelligent cöoperation of each individual can alone secure the welfare of the whole will assure to public opinion the sober earnestness it lacks. Just what the details of this colossal task of lending moral dignity to the public opinion of a people will require, we cannot here pause to consider. It may involve increasing the social responsibility of the individual through participation in government; it may mean greater care and intelligence in selecting political representatives and social experts; it may necessitate economic changes looking to an industrial democracy; in any case, it must seek to bring the individual to feel a pervasive human interest that will in turn create the like-mindedness and sense of larger loyalties without which an intelligent public opinion or an effective social conscience are impossible.

§ 3. The Organic Social Judgment

It is possible for us to formulate the problem of the relation of public opinion to the social conscience in the terms of the relation of the subject to the predicate in the judgment. The predicate of every judgment is provided by the organization of previous experiences, the "apperceiving mass" through which the new data of knowledge are orientated and evaluated. The child that has read of the kangaroo and perhaps copied pictures of it is able when it sees the real animal for the first time at the "zoo" to pronounce a reliable judgment in terms of this previously accumulated and organized experience. When President Lowell speaks of "the true conception of public opinion" as "a general conception of righteousness in which so far as possible all men unite", he has in mind chiefly that mass of tested sentiments that function as the predicate in the judgment pronounced upon public issues. The social mind in the comprehensive sense includes not only this common body of sentiments but also the ideas, the issues, the new problems, that are constantly emerging and being

judged in terms of this " general conception of political righteousness " on which all good men agree.

So far as public opinion has to do with the discussion of the new elements in the situation or the formulation of the problem, it is possible to say that public opinion provides us with the subject and the social conscience with the predicate of social judgments. It is of course true that the critical examination of new data of experience and the final formulation of the issue cannot be arbitrarily divorced from the process of applying the fixed ethical principles of the social conscience to these issues. We have here to do with what the logicians are pleased to call the " habit-forming " and the " habit-applying " phases of the social mind. A more detailed analysis of the relations between these two phases would show that they are interde endent. For the " habit-forming " phase or public discussion suggests to the " habit-applying " phase or social conscience new principles with which to meet new issues, while the social conscience provides the sanction for the norms used in the judgment of issues. Here we have a suggestion as to the dialectic of moral progress from the larger social point of view.

It is well to remember, however, that between the fleeting public opinion, which is merely " knowledge in the making " and which deals very often with matters of superficial interest, and the mature and unchallenged public sentiment included in the social conscience, there are many gradations. We may have many and widely diverse social judgments ranging from the quasi-rational fads and crazes of dress or food or amusement to the sober and mature pronouncement of public sentiment. In general, however, public opinion is concerned with the unattached idea, the unformed judgment, the issues that demand critical examination and that are suggested by unforeseen social changes. The importance of the social judgment pronounced upon these depends directly upon the extent to which the fundamental loyalties and convictions of the community are brought to bear.

In all those pronouncements where the social conscience

is involved it is possible, therefore, to speak of "organic social judgments",[1] thus differentiating them from the casual and fleeting judgments of the social mind that do not tap the deeper loyalties of the community. Much that passes as public opinion partakes of this shallow and unsubstantial character. It finds a parallel in the casual utterances of the individual who is called upon in ordinary conversation to pronounce many superficial judgments upon issues that do not interest him vitally and the significance of which he has not duly considered. But when, in the topsy turvy of public opinion, the ideas, issues, or what not that are tossed about on the tongues of men, come to involve those fundamental norms that are generally recognized as necessary to the welfare of the community we have the moral element. The extent to which the moral element is present may vary greatly. Every great question, however, such as the drink evil, child labor, woman's rights and the like, takes on an ethical atmosphere, for it cannot be attacked without raising the ultimate question of a well-balanced social order that will best conserve human values.

The very subtlety and spiritual character of these ultimate human values makes a clear-cut moral judgment on large social issues difficult. It is hard for the average man to grasp and apply them in an intelligent and effective manner. It often happens, therefore, that social progress can be better furthered by centering attention and effort upon some concrete issue. The emphasis of the more or less selfish incentive of industrial efficiency has furthered prohibition sentiment where an appeal to the more subtle moral issue has failed. At the same time when great absorbing issues such as slavery, prohibition, or world-freedom come really to engage the attention and men are forced to decide the issue, they fall back consciously or unconsciously upon the great norms of the moral sentiments. There is nothing that the corrupt politician or the opponents of reform fear more than a direct appeal to the principles of the social conscience. Hence their strenu-

[1] The phrase is Cooley's, see his *Social Organization*, p. 123.

ous efforts in political campaigns to inject personal, economic or other issues in order to prevent the average voter from fixing his attention upon the moral issue involved. The danger of a clear-cut moral issue for the cause of the grafter or the representative of selfish interests lies in the fact that on such issues an enlightened community rarely equivocates or blunders.

Every "organic social judgment" presupposes a more or less extended period of social evolution and the persistence of a certain type of civilization through which the sentiments that compose the social conscience are organized. For without such continuous and more or less self-conscious social traditions an effective social conscience is impossible. It often happens that this moulding of sentiments and of habits of thought takes place under different conditions from those under which the problem arises. In such cases the relation between the social conscience and the issue is more or less factitious or accidental. If the previous experience has tended to give that training and social discipline that enable men to judge wisely, it is well. If the previous training results in sets of feelings and turns of thought ill adapted to the solution of the given problem, the community has no choice but to make use of the equipment it has. For social pressure demands that the decision be made and that right speedily. The tragedy of the French Revolution was that society as a whole lacked the disciplined and enlightened social conscience that would have enabled men to solve their problems. The colossal injustice of the Reconstruction period in the South lay in the attempt on the part of the dominant political group to force upon the ex-slave owners an artificial, ready-made social conscience.

The sanest and most healthful conditions of progress are found where the forces at work in the social situation, in the midst of which great issues come slowly to a head, function to discipline and organize the social conscience that must provide a solution for these issues. The social process thus suggests a remedy while at the same time creating great problems. The

marvelous toughness of English civilization is largely due to the fact that the interpretative and self-adjusting power of the social conscience has always kept pace with the demands made upon it for the solution of new questions. The pragmatic English mind has somehow managed to wrest from the very social process that creates the issues, if not complete remedies, at least some sort of a compromise that would make life tolerable.

The social conscience, as furnishing the predicate of the "organic social judgment", is necessarily conventional, conservative and relatively fixed. It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that it does not undergo change or that change is inimical to its integrity and usefulness. The elements of change are present whenever newer social experiences are formulated by discussion and presented to the social conscience for evaluation. For it is true of communities as well as of individuals that new data are never integrated into the older bodies of knowledge without changing this knowledge. Every time a community is forced to appeal to its fundamental loyalties in the solution of a new issue the social conscience itself is, in part at least, modified; in pronouncing its judgment society assimilates the new experience. Where a social judgment is reached only after prolonged debate and vigorous clash of interests, fundamental modifications of the social conscience invariably ensue. The conflict over slavery is a typical illustration. The recent colossal struggle for world-freedom bids fair to have a far-reaching influence upon the fundamental loyalties of this as well as of many other nations.

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CHAPTER X

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

§ 1. The Social Conscience Never Impartial

Obviously the greatest handicap of the social conscience is the natural moral lethargy of mankind. A certain amount of idealism is necessary for all moral effect. But moral idealism is especially necessary before we can make the vague ethical sentiments of the social conscience play an effective rôle in the lives of men. For, after all, the social conscience is not so much a body of definite authoritative moral laws as of traditional ways of feeling and acting that owe their hold upon society to the presence of the eternal social problem. It is only in times of great need that men rise above the level of habit and ethical tradition becomes vitalized by the moral imagination. It is then that the social conscience assumes a conscious and dominant rôle in the direction of human affairs. The sheer pressure of events forces men to project themselves through imagination beyond the immediately given. Men are moral because they are idealists and they are idealists because life demands it. During those periods of social evolution, therefore, when the emphasis is upon things rather than upon ideas, when materialism takes precedence over idealism, there is a tendency to discount the highest and most exacting ethical traditions.

But the social conscience has limitations other than those that inhere in human nature. It is never impartial. It cannot from its very nature and constitution take a judicial and critical attitude. Fixed systems of sentiment that have grown up under the social discipline of the past must necessarily be applied more or less arbitrarily to the issues of the day. The right of the social conscience to pronounce upon these issues implies an insistence upon its own authority and finality. When once

this authority is challenged, the social conscience loses its significance as a court of final reference. This at once raises a rather uncomfortable question. In a democracy we are thrown back upon the public sentiment that has come down from the past for the settlement of our problems and yet we cannot expect from this judge a critical and independent weighing of the evidence. The decision is rendered in terms of fixed and traditional forms of thought and feeling. How do we know, then, that an appeal to public sentiment can ever secure an equable and intelligent consideration of the interests of all concerned?

It may be remarked, first, that, in so far as the habits of thought and feeling embodied in the social conscience arose independent of the present situation, they cannot be accused of being prejudiced one way or the other. They are impartial very much in the same way that existing laws are impartial with reference to new developments of crime. The laws deal with crime in a habitual and institutionalized fashion. If, however, forms of crime arise for which the laws provide no adequate provisions they fail, but through no fault of their own. The attitude of the moral sentiment of the community towards new issues is not unlike that of the individual when faced with a moral problem involving new elements. He has, as a rule, neither the time nor the ability to recast his moral equipment in the thorough-going fashion which would enable him to meet the issue fully. The demand for action requires that he decide as best he can in terms of the moral insight furnished him by past experience. The question of the freedom and moral initiative that he commands at the moment is really a question of the kind of habits of thought and action that he has built up in the past. Breadth of view, richness of moral experience, Socratic insight, a plastic, and adjustable will, these are the assets that insure a successful solution of his problems.

It may be remarked, secondly, that the arbitrariness of the social conscience is not to be obviated by confining our attention to the immediate situation when the fixed habits of thought

and feeling of the community are face to face with a moral issue. It is the training of public sentiment in the past that alone can make for the solution of the problems of the present. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is possible to institutionalize the critical attitude. There is such a thing as making freedom a habit of mind. It is possible thereby to secure the support of an omnipotent and authoritative public sentiment in favor of progress. This indeed must be sought in every effort to educate public sentiment. For it is a fundamental prerequisite to progress to secure social habits that will insist authoritatively upon a critical and unprejudiced analysis of all matters of vital public concern. There is no reason why the social conscience should not become thoroughly prejudiced in favor of an unprejudiced attitude on public questions.

§ 2. The Narrow Scope of the Social Conscience

The social conscience is limited also by the narrowness of its scope of application. It must express itself in relatively simple terms. The social conscience is most intelligent and effective where it has before it an issue that can be decided in terms of "yes" or "no". Where the situation becomes complicated and several alternatives are offered demanding critical reflection and weighing of evidence, the social conscience fails, simply because it is composed of the sentiments of millions of diverse human beings who cannot be relied upon to arrive at anything like unanimity on a complex issue. If the proposition upon which a categorical pronouncement is asked is comprehensive and fundamental in the sense that it subsumes more or less the minor issues and the various interests involved, we may hope to get a worth-while expression of public sentiment. If, on the other hand, the issue raised is unimportant, artificial, involving technical knowledge, or has no bearings upon fundamental interests of the community it is difficult to get an effective expression of public sentiment. The broad ethical categories of the social conscience are of course useless where a technical question is concerned. It is only when technical, local, or minor considerations can all be

gathered together under some simple ethical principle and this principle applied directly to a situation involving definite alternatives that an appeal to the social conscience will bring intelligent results.

The inherent limitations of the scope of the social conscience emerge most strikingly perhaps in the political sphere. In a representative democracy men are chosen ostensibly as official mouthpieces of public sentiment. Too often they find themselves forced to legislate upon matters involving technical knowledge or upon questions of obscure and local interest with which they are not familiar. This encourages various dubious combinations of voters and opens the door for the manipulations of the boss. The city member wants a franchise bill passed and compounds with the country member interested in a bill to make a stream in his locality navigable. Neither understands the facts as to the bill for which he is voting and risks the disillusionment of learning later that he has unwittingly furthered graft or waste of public funds. The weakness in such a situation is that the representative of public opinion is called upon to perform duties that are properly the task of the specialist.

The various attempts of recent times, such as the recall, direct primary, referendum, and the like, designed to correct these evils by a direct and constant appeal to public sentiment, often proceed upon the naïve assumption that there is no question of concern to the community that cannot be solved by an appeal to the people. But a popular vote on a law cannot possibly be of any value unless it involves a principle upon which all voters can form an intelligent opinion. Such an opinion can only be formed where it is possible to apply to the issue familiar and generally acknowledged principles that are deeply embedded in the sentiments of the community. The uncertainty of public opinion in states such as Oregon, where constant use has been made of direct legislation, seems to indicate that the voter was often not clear as to the nature of the issues involved and in any case was unable to make an intelligent and consistent application of the "serious, deep-

rooted, and stable" public sentiment through which alone the people can make the collective will effective. President Lowell's conclusion is, "If it be true that the people are more capable of forming opinions on general principles and moral issues than on a mass of details, then the referendum would appear to accomplish its object better in questions of the former class, and details should be referred to popular vote as little as the trustworthiness of the public servants will permit".[1]

A fallacy, therefore, lurks behind the dictum we often hear to the effect that more democracy is the best possible cure for the ills of democracy. Faguet points out that governments are just as liable to fail through an over-emphasis of the principles for which they stand as through the neglect of these principles. Prussianism toppled to its ruin through an overplus of Prussianism. Where public sentiment is overworked in a democracy the inevitable result is that power falls into the unregulated and irresponsible hands of a few who will be under strong temptation to abuse this power. It is not a question of the constant and ill-considered appeal to the social conscience of the community but rather a question of providing the most efficient and intelligent methods for placing this body of moral sentiment at the disposal of the community.

§ 3. The Tyranny of the Majority

The criticism which has been commonly advanced against all communities in which public sentiment is sovereign is that they are especially subject to the tyranny of the majority. The term "tyranny of the majority" is one that has been used in various and often ambiguous senses. The essence of tyranny is the inequitable and arbitrary use of power. A majority in a democracy where public sentiment is supreme is tyrannical only when it tries to use its power in ways that are contrary to what public sentiment sanctions. In other words, the place and function of the majority is delimited by general ideas as to the ends for which government should strive, the means that should be used to attain these ends,

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 216, 232.

and the principles that should actuate all the members of a free democratic community. The sole reason for the appeal to the majority is found in the fact that the will of the majority is as close as we can get to an accurate expression of this consensus of opinion and sentiment which is the ultimate source of authority. The moral sanction of the majority does not lie in its absolute trustworthiness but in the fact that in a democracy men have agreed to abide by the will of the majority as the best possible means for ascertaining public sentiment on any issue. To repudiate the will of the majority is to repudiate government and order and to revert to anarchy.

The danger of the majority's abuse of its power has been abundantly safeguarded by the founders of American institutions through courts and constitutions and bills of rights. The legislative bodies, both state and federal, pass laws that are the expression of the will of the majority. But according to the genius of American institutions the people have agreed to abide by those laws only when they are pronounced constitutional by the courts. To decide that a given piece of legislation is unconstitutional is equivalent to saying that it is a result of using the rule of the majority in a way which all the members of the community have not agreed to accept as binding. That is to say, legislatures have not the right to use the principle of the majority to give expression to public sentiment except along certain very definitely predetermined lines laid down by the constitution and judicial decisions based thereon. Hence it may happen that laws, in thorough accord with the moral sentiment of the community, are invalidated by the courts. In a recent decision the Supreme Court invalidated the child labor law, on the ground that it was not in accord with the fixed and constitutional forms through which the majority must seek to give expression to public sentiment. In its action the Supreme Court was not trying to thwart the sane and progressive public sentiment seeking expression through this law. The court merely insists that this public

sentiment shall find expression in a form which all the members of the community have agreed to accept as authoritative and binding.

§ 4. The Fatalism of the Multitude

Bryce finds a most serious weakness of American society in " the fatalism of the multitude ". " The fatalism of the multitude " is but another name for the absolute and unquestioning surrender of the average man to the deliverances of the mass of sentiments associated with the social conscience. Even our cherished traditions, such as freedom of speech, tend to disarm any criticism of the verdict of public sentiment. For the recalcitrant is supposed to have enjoyed abundant opportunity to utter his mind and, when the final decision comes and the public pronounces upon the issues, he has no other court of appeal. Just as our legal system does not contemplate any repudiation of the deliverances of the decision of the Supreme Court so there is no provision for the repudiation of the dictates of public sentiment. To repudiate public sentiment would threaten the integrity of the entire moral economy. Furthermore, the atmosphere of almost religious sanctity with which the patriotic American surrounds his democratic institutions lends to the utterance of the social conscience the authority of a moral Sinai. *Vox populi* becomes synonymous with *vox dei*. A pessimistic or a sceptical attitude towards public sentiment is thus placed in the same category with atheism and anarchy.

That which constitutes the power of democracy, the secret of its hold upon the hearts of men, may indeed become a great stumbling block in the way of progress. Democracy is in its last analysis a state of mind. It consists of certain ideals, for the most part exceedingly vague and intangible, which must be intelligently appreciated by all and made the basis of communal action. But, strange as it may seem, this very *like-mindedness* contains a menace. For as the sense of this like-mindedness grows upon the individual through education, social institutions and the immeasurable suggestive power of

millions of his fellow citizens, the tendency is to destroy personal initiative. Uniformity in language, social customs, political institutions, education, and art combine with the sheer geographical expanse of his native land to coerce the individual American, to put him in the strait-jacket of uniformity. "On all sides", says Bryce, "there stretches round him an illimitable horizon; and beneath the blue vault which meets that horizon there is everywhere the same busy multitude with its clamor of mingled voices which he hears close by. In this multitude his own being seems lost. He has the sense of insignificance which overwhelms us when at night we survey the host of heaven, and know that from even the nearest fixed star this planet of ours is invisible." Thus there arises the fatalistic attitude born of the overmastering sense of the multitude. The legitimate and necessary democratic conviction that the majority must rule comes in time to mean that its decisions are eternally right and any revolt against them is, therefore, morally reprehensible.

The psychological effects of this regard for the opinions of the multitude on American thought and life are simply incalculable in their subtlety and power. Respect for public opinion has become so thoroughly ingrained into our national life that it is little short of a fetish. The deliverances of the majority have gradually taken on for us much of the indefectible character of the laws of nature. To challenge the intelligence or the finality of the will of the majority is as futile as to get into an argument with gravitation or to dispute the precession of the equinoxes. This is unquestionably the most powerful because the most subtle form of the tyranny of the average man. Through this fatalistic regard for the will of the multitude the average man becomes for all practical purposes our democratic apotheosis of wisdom. His power lies in his very intangibleness. We never meet him face to face; we can never corner him in an argument. He is a spiritual entity and dwells only in the souls of men, and yet his omnipotent, ubiquitous hand shapes our individual destinies. The sheer massiveness and pervasiveness of his influ-

ence school us into a belief in his infallibility. No moral alternatives can possibly transcend the scope of his consciousness. His inclusiveness is our guarantee of the ultimate triumph of the right. Because of this naïve religious trust in the wisdom of the average man the American citizen goes to the polls, casts his vote, and then takes a "moral holiday". His peace of soul is seldom disturbed by the fact that he may have been hopelessly in the minority. His mental attitude is aptly paralleled by that of the mediaeval theologian who was willing to be damned for the glory of God.

In his loyal allegiance to the will of the majority the American is merely giving expression to a deeply human characteristic. For the vast majority of men it is far more natural to obey than to rebel. Furthermore, it is well in a great community still earnestly seeking to understand itself and distraught by the strident voices of conflicting interests to have a final court of appeal. Men cannot live by controversy and argument alone. The danger, however, lies not in the repudiation of all authority but in too much acquiescence. Bryce remarks that Americans take the lateness of a railroad train or the delay of a street car by a dray in front of a warehouse door far more complacently than Englishmen. This is but one illustration of the countless ways in which the habit of constant acquiescence to the will of the majority tends to discourage initiative in matters of public concern and to place the average American at the mercy of the *status quo*.

Theoretically we have a free press, dedicated to the untrammelled expression of the opinions of a free people. But in industrial centers where the controlling forces are largely economic our great dailies either voice the mind of the prevailing economic interests or are content for the most part to play the rôle of simple purveyors of the news. If we wish critical enlightenment upon these questions we must seek it in scientific journals or in the columns of the independent weekly and monthly periodicals. In strongly Protestant communities objection is often raised to the appointment of

Catholics as instructors in high schools and state institutions. The popular revivalist in a community mainly Protestant and Roman Catholic pours out his religious billingsgate upon the higher critic on the one hand and the outcast Unitarian on the other, knowing full well that both are *personae non gratae* to the majority of his hearers. Educators are familiar with the protest against the teaching of evolution and similar "heretical" doctrines in institutions of learning on the ground that they are contrary to the prevailing religious convictions of the community. Respect for the belief of the majority is thus allowed to tyrannize over the thought of the minority, violating our most precious traditions of spiritual freedom.

§ 5. Democracy and the Expert

In connection with the death of John Purroy Mitchel, who gave to New York City as mayor a most efficient administration and yet was defeated for reëlection, it was remarked, "It has been the weakness of democracy that it has held clean workmanship in contempt, especially in public service. Laziness has sometimes appeared to rise to the glory of a democratic ideal; slipshod and dishonest workmanship to the fantastic dignity of a democratic privilege. The great man has too often been the man who by hook or crook got enough money salted away to live in idleness ever after. The attempt is constantly made among us to make efficiency synonymous with autocracy. We have failed to see that the difference between autocracy and democracy is not necessarily in the instrument, but in the control of the instrument, that if democracy fails to forge and use instruments at least equally well adapted to the ends of public service as the instruments devised and used by autocracy, it will jeopardize its own existence".[1] To this may be added the words of President Lowell: "Whether popular government will endure or not depends upon its success in solving its problems, and among these none is more insistent than the question of its capacity both to use and control the experts, a question

[1] *The New Republic*, July 20, 1918.

closely interwoven with the nature, the expression, and the limitation of public opinion ".[1]

For his own moral salvation as well as for that of the community the average man, therefore, must make his peace with the expert. If cleanliness is next to godliness, efficiency is next to public morality. In the eternal struggle of our municipalities against the encroachments of public service corporations what avails the righteousness of their cause or the vague moral sentiments of the community when that sentiment lacks able leadership and can lay its hands upon no effective machinery for giving it expression? The patient and oppressed municipality with its poorly paid solicitor who holds his position at the will of politicians is no match for the brilliant galaxy of the best legal talent which serves the corporation.

The average man in American democracy is afraid of the expert for several reasons. (a) The fear of bureaucracy inherited from the days of revolt from England still colors our thinking. The use of the expert is natural for a monarchy and for all forms of absolutism but arouses the suspicions of traditional democracy. There is a latent fear of the loss of liberty through the introduction of the specialist. (b) The expert is distrusted because, being a specialist and removed from the life of the masses, he is suspected of losing touch with those fundamental human values dear to the average man. This is perhaps, from the standpoint of radical democracy, the most justifiable criticism of the expert. The political expert understands how to parry this criticism by mingling with the people and creating the impression that he is in thorough sympathy with them. (c) The note of egalitarianism, which Faguet has shown to be so antagonistic to efficiency, has been prominent in American democracy from the days of Jackson and DeTocqueville. It insists that every man is inherently capable of administering the affairs of the people. The principle of rotation in office is a tacit recognition of every individual's right to share in public affairs in so far as possible. Such a policy is obviously incompatible with efficiency in public serv-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 303.

ice. (d) The universal preference for the "good" man, that is, the man who embodies the prevailing conventional ethical sentiments of the community as opposed to the intelligent and skilful man, has probably done as much as anything else to dull the popular mind to the importance of the expert.

The demand that the man in touch with the general sentiments of the social conscience be preferred to the man who has the technical knowledge necessary to solve social problems but lacks these general sentiments is natural in a democracy. It is obvious, however, that by placing the merely "good" but otherwise inefficient man in positions of responsibility demanding special knowledge we may defeat the very ends sought by the public. For the furthering of public welfare demands, especially in our highly complex modern life, not only the right ethical attitude but the requisite technical equipment to make the ideal effective in the situation concerned. It is the lack of this special equipment that has brought the merely "good" man into distinct disrepute as a social reformer.

It is asserted, however, that the expert savors of collectivism and that collectivism and democracy are fundamentally incompatible. "The ideal of democracy", says Dicey, "is government for the good of the people by the people, and in accordance with the wish of the people; the ideal of collectivism is government for the good of the people by experts, or officials who know, or think they know, what is good for the people better than either any non-official person or than the mass of the people themselves" (*op. cit.*, p. LXXIII). The expert emphasizes science and a more or less thought-out social philosophy. The democratic average man emphasizes action based on common sense which if short-sighted is apparently feasible and easy of apprehension. Where the expert tries to force upon a citizenship trained in democratic traditions, laws or ideas that do not have the sanction of the social conscience, conflict is inevitable.

Democracy, we are told, furthermore, is constantly doing things that no expert would sanction. The recent socialistic

legislation of democratic England is a case in point. The English trades dispute act of 1906 declared that "in action against a trade union, whether of workmen or masters, or against any members or officials thereof on behalf of themselves and of other members of the trade union in respect of any tortuous act, alleged to have been committed by or on behalf of the trade union, shall not be entertained by any court". This was virtually equivalent to conferring upon trade unions a position of protection and privilege not enjoyed by any other group of persons in the British Empire. From the standpoint of the expert such legislation is dangerous and yet it must stand so long as it enjoys the sanction of the social conscience of the community. It proclaims to the ends of the earth the fundamental principle of a democracy, namely, that not logical consistency nor social theory nor even abstract equity are to decide issues but the deliverances of the moral sentiments of the masses of Englishmen. In spite of its shortcomings it is claimed that democracy must register the will of the people, with all its variations and inconsistencies, thereby securing a vital and organic relation between the inner life of the people and their government to an extent impossible under a socialistic order. The judgment of democracy will not always be self-conscious nor free from sentimentalities or blunders, but the masses of men will feel that it is their own will in so far as that can find expression and whatever errors or shortcomings this judgment may reveal can be corrected by the same sovereign master who made the mistake in the first place. The average man is, therefore, not willing to surrender the sovereign power of making mistakes, even though he secures the scientific direction of the expert. So runs the argument for the fundamental incompatibility between democracy and the expert.

It would seem, then, that the presence of the expert in a democracy raises an uncomfortable dilemma. Progress demands scientific method, a uniform and consistent policy and the patient striving towards a definite goal. But in a democracy law and method and plan must wait upon the consent of

the people for their realization. The people, however, are often irrational and unscientific. They are inclined to think in concrete, immediate, unscientific and personal terms. They are guided more often by feeling than by cold reason and are inclined to distrust the expert. When a democracy selects an expert, therefore, it would appear that the will of the people is appealed to for the authority to defeat the will of the people if that should be necessary. The difficulty appears in the solution of a problem such as divorce. For the democratic average man marriage is essentially a personal relation, a contract between man and woman. When the spiritual sympathy and affection that make the union real are gone it becomes intolerable and a source of great unhappiness and social friction. Hence we find democratic countries granting divorces more freely than others. But from the standpoint of the expert the dissolution of the marriage tie is not an individual matter. There are principles of social welfare at stake that concern all and which in every progressive community must be solved in a scientific and large-minded fashion.

What, then, should be the relation of the expert to the social conscience that speaks through the average man? Obviously the expert must in the end serve the moral behests of the community. But he must not be placed at the mercy of the fluctuations of public sentiment. The expert is interested primarily in the scientific and technical side of the problem. He furnishes, therefore, just that special knowledge needed by the community for realizing and safeguarding the values that make life tolerable. The community, however, must utilize this special knowledge at second hand. In other words, there must be a mediator between the expert and the public. This mediator should be in touch with the general drift of sentiment of the community, on the one hand, and should possess, on the other, an intelligent appreciation of the place and function of the expert. The trustees of a hospital or the regents of a great university should faithfully register the enlightened sentiment of the community as

to the rôle of these institutions; they should indicate in a general way to their staffs of experts what those ideals are, but they should leave to the experts the technical problems of making those ideals effective.

Experts are, of course, of various kinds. In some cases they are largely figure-heads who register in a more or less mechanical fashion the will of the community. Others, such as surgeons, judges, or health officers, furnish the community with special knowledge which it must use in order to give effective expression of its general sense of justice. The twelve jurymen selected to try a case are not necessarily experts, though they represent the social conscience. We have here, as it were, a segment of the social conscience that is made to do duty for the entire community. Technical knowledge is here rather a hindrance than a help. What is sought is an unprejudiced application to the case of the sane and unsophisticated moral sentiments of the community. Hence the careful elimination of prejudiced individuals or of those who through their callings or otherwise are incapacitated for representing the healthy moral sense of the community. Every precaution is taken to secure the best expression of this moral sentiment. The jury is seated apart; only that evidence is submitted which is without bias; the jurymen are protected from outside influence; they receive a solemn final charge from the judge; their verdict must be unanimous; if there is a suspicion of anything irregular a new trial is granted.

Back of the jury system, which dates from the days of democratic Athens and seems indeed to flourish especially in democracies, is the underlying recognition of the fact that there are registered in the sentiments of the average citizens certain fundamental moral categories which must be brought to bear in all their simplicity and unprejudiced truth upon moral issues if we are to secure justice. In a sense the jury system is the greatest historical monument that we have to the importance and the authoritativeness of the social conscience.

The efficiency of the jury system depends of course upon

the homogeneity of the social texture and the uniform recognition of common ethical loyalties. Some interesting questions might be asked, however, as to the efficacy of the jury system where there is great diversity, racially, economically, culturally, or otherwise, and the consequent weakening of the moral like-mindedness that the jury system presupposes. From the standpoint of social psychology, if not from that of democracy and the ideals of the Constitution, there is much to be said for the refusal of the Southern white to allow the negro to sit on a jury. The validity of the jury system depends in a very fundamental sense upon the existence of a homogeneous and enlightened social conscience and where this is lacking, as is the case in the "black belt" of the South, a jury system to which all members of the community are admitted indiscriminately might become a legal farce or a downright menace to social justice. The question may also be raised as to whether our time-honored jury system, with its associations of racial homogeneity and uniform ethical traditions drawn from Anglo-Saxon England, can be applied with entire success to the polyglot communities of our large cities and industrial centers where neither racial homogeneity nor continuity of ethical traditions exist.

Finally, there are limitations of the social conscience arising from the peculiarities of human nature itself. Fundamental impulses connected with sex, race, property, and the like are easily aroused under certain situations and often make an effective public sentiment impossible. It is more than likely that any radical attempt to create a public sentiment that would sanction the elimination of the institution of private property would be shipwrecked upon the fundamental property instinct. It has happened that laws dealing with eugenics and based apparently upon scientific principles have come to naught because not in harmony with fundamental impulses connected with sex. Not even the enactment of the Fourteenth Amendment, the bill of rights, and the bayonet rule of Reconstruction sufficed to lay a basis for a public sentiment in the South strong enough to override the instinctive antipath-

ies associated with race. In other words, the extent to which a vigorous and effective social conscience can be developed is delimited by the peculiarities of that original equipment of human instincts that provides the raw materials for moral sentiments. Needless agitation of subjects that challenge these instincts tends to undermine social institutions. A democratic order that would avoid unnecessary shocks and eliminate inevitable friction and waste of social energies must frankly recognize these instinctive forces that delimit the sphere within which we can hope for an efficient social conscience.

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CHAPTER XI

THE PROBLEM OF MORAL PROGRESS

§ 1. Ambiguity of the Term Progress

Moral progress as an ethical postulate or a belief prerequisite to a healthful and progressive moral life is constantly being confused with moral progress as a fact in the history of morals. The problem of moral progress, therefore, suffers from the disabilities peculiar to such problems as freedom of the will, immortality, or good and evil. The demands of human nature have weighted the scales in favor of an affirmative answer. An unbiased and scientific attitude towards any problem implies a willingness to face all the facts and abide by whatever conclusions they indicate. But the world has always refused to listen to the moral pessimist, scientific or otherwise, and that not without good reasons. For, obviously, no incentive to moral effort, not even the moral order itself, would long endure in any community, the members of which had been convinced that moral progress neither exists nor is possible. The moral pessimist is tolerated because he is hopelessly in the minority. There may be a semblance of justification for him in the salutary check he exercises upon the exuberant and undisciplined moral enthusiasms of his fellows. Men often find him interesting, sometimes they pity him, uniformly they discredit him because his conclusions are patently incompatible with the demands of life.

The question of moral progress has also suffered from the illusions that have always beset the question of progress in general. The sheer fact of change has been mistaken for progress. This is due mainly to the mobility of our modern world and the unparalleled liberation of energies giving us the control over time and space and the production and distribu-

tion of material and intellectual goods. We have been taught that the international ties born of commercial and industrial development, the financial necessities arising from a world-wide credit, the costliness and destructive nature of scientific warfare, not to mention the effects of science and art upon human relations, have combined to create a progressive civilization in which war is impossible. To-day we are sadly disillusioned because we failed to see that mere change or increased facilities for change do not insure progress. Progress, and especially moral progress, is something that must be achieved. It does not follow automatically upon the skilful mastery of the economic or mechanical instrumentalities for the satisfaction of human needs. It implies a goal, a plan of socially constructive work.

Again the triumph of the theory of evolution in modern thought has had much to do with the spread of an illusory notion of progress. We have smuggled in under the notion of evolution as a cosmic force all the old complacent optimism associated with the great idealists or the Christian doctrine of Providence. Evolution has filled us with the conceit that we are the heirs of all the ages. It has encouraged a sentimental and shallow attitude that inclines us to take a "moral holiday" which we have not earned. It is not difficult to show that evolution, whether biologic, social, or moral, cannot be identified with progress. In fact one of the earliest and most brilliant of the exponents of evolution arrives at thoroughly pessimistic conclusions when he comes to discuss the selective effects of social environment upon moral progress.[1]

§ 2. Theories of Moral Progress

It is possible to state the problem of moral progress from three different points of view. Since we have to do with character primarily we may seek to measure progress in terms of the absolute improvement in the moral fiber of the race. The criteria of progress in this case will be found in the constitution of human nature itself. It is possible, furthermore,

[1] Wallace, *Social Environment and Moral Progress*, pp. 36, 153.

that progress may be a matter of a clearer insight into the nature of the moral experience. This is the contention for the most part of the idealists from the days of Plato to T. H. Green. Finally there have been thinkers who have felt that moral progress is essentially a social matter. For, given the fixed hereditary endowment of instincts and emotions, moral advance is largely a question of shaping this through the social setting. Certainly for the Greeks moral progress presupposed the peculiar institutions of the ancient city-state of which Athens was the type. Hence it is possible to find the criterion of moral progress in the harmony of interests, the intelligent balancing of contending wills in the social order. In this sense moral progress is the last and supreme test of social progress.

Theories of moral progress based upon the notion of absolute improvement in the constitution of human nature are the most difficult to support. Moral progress is now no longer considered as involving the elimination of an hereditary taint in the instinctive equipment through original sin or otherwise, as was taught by Christian theologians, Tertullian, Augustine, or John Calvin. We have little to support the contention that the moral character of the race has been improved through the selective influence of war, eliminating the pugnacious and bloodthirsty and preserving the peaceful and sympathetic types. The instinctive equipment is in fact neither moral nor immoral. It is unmoral or only potentially moral. Hence we cannot say that sympathy or the tender emotions are any more or any less ethical than the fighting instinct. Moral progress is not a matter of cultivating the one and of eliminating the other. The problem of moral progress arises only when we face the question of rationalizing and socializing this instinctive equipment.

Granting the assumption of absolute idealism that there is a general drift towards moral betterment running through the centuries, we find the problem of measuring that drift exceedingly difficult. We have little tangible evidence of an "orderly improvement on a great scale". Let us take the status of woman as a test. In the English law of Blackstone's day, who

published his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* in 1765-68, "A married woman can scarcely be said to have had a legal personality", says Hobhouse, "so great is the number of her disqualifications as to holding of property, as to capacity to give evidence, as to the custody of her children, even as to her legal responsibility for crimes; and many of these disqualifications lasted on down to the present generation. If we turn to the oldest code of laws in the world, the recently discovered laws of Hammurabi, we shall find that few of these disqualifications applied to married women in Babylonia some 2,000 years before Christ; yet it would be unfair to infer that the civilization of England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was on the whole inferior to that of Babylonia in the third millennium before Christ".[1] These and other facts of history seem to show that in so far as moral improvement is a reality it appears to be irregular, spasmodic, local; moral advance in one respect is often accompanied by moral deterioration in other respects.

It is doubtful, furthermore, whether we can establish unequivocally the idealistic thesis that the highly developed civilizations are the most moral or that the conditions making for the development of society always make for the improvement of moral character. The industrial revolution that laid the basis for England's commercial supremacy was purchased at the price of a moral deterioration of her lower classes from which she has hardly yet recovered. At no period of our national history has material prosperity been so great or the accumulation of wealth so rapid as during the last generation. Yet a recent writer remarks, "During the last quarter of a century general relaxation of American moral fiber has unquestionably been taking place; and in spite of the increasing use of disciplinary measures, the process of relaxation has not as yet been fairly checked".[2] It can hardly be denied that the tremendous pitch of scientific, economic and political advancement to which Prussian statecraft brought modern Ger-

[1] *Morals in Evolution*, p. 31 f.
[2] H. Croly, *Progressive Democracy*, p. 207.

many has been accompanied by an insidious poisoning of the very fountain heads of the moral and spiritual life of the nation.[1]

Finally, the various criteria of moral progress that have been sought by the idealists in the general traits of the mature moral character have at best merely a formal or metaphysical value. They do not offer us a practical test of moral progress. These characteristics are, to be sure, relatively permanent in moral experience. The mature moral character, for example, always takes on the form of self-realization or self-perfection; it suggests authoritative and categorical forms of group experience and tradition that may very easily be identified with an absolute moral order. But Kant's famous doctrine of an innate principle, a will that is good absolutely in and of itself, which reflects the moral economy of the universe, is an ethical fiction. For obviously a will is good only as it functions in a certain social situation and this varies with the individual and with the age. The good will demanded by the famous *regula* of Benedict of Nursia (480-543 A.D.) can hardly be identified with the good will outlined in Plato's *Republic* or in Calvin's *Institutes*. Good in every case is a function of the social order in which the individual lives.

The most profound and metaphysically sustained attempt of recent times at a theory of moral progress measured in terms of self-realization gives the impression of an argument that is eternally doubling back upon itself. We are told, " It is the consciousness of possibilities in ourselves, unrealized but constantly in process of realization, that alone enables us to read the idea of development into what we observe of natural life, and to conceive that there must be such a thing as a plan of the world ". To be sure, we can never formulate accurately and finally this ultimate criterion of moral progress. " Of a life of completed development, of activity with the end attained, we can only speak or think in negatives, and thus only can we speak or think of that state of being in

[1] This is the thesis of Holmes' brilliant work, *The Nemesis of Docility.*

which, according to our theory, the ultimate moral good must consist. Yet the conviction that there must be such a state of being, merely negative as is our theoretical apprehension of it, may have supreme influence over conduct, in moving us to that effort after the Better which, at least as a conscious effort, implies the conviction of there being a Best ".[1]

Starting with the idea or rather the postulate of moral betterment, which we have seen to be inseparable from the moral experience, Green projects this idea into the universe and makes it part of an eternal plan, an infinite moral process, that centers in the divine consciousness. This comprehensive plan is then brought down to earth again and made to do duty as the measure of progress in that immediate moral experience from which this infinite plan is inferred. Even granting the logical validity of such reasoning it has little practical significance for the problem of moral progress. The reality of moral progress is not to be inferred from the postulate or the ideal of moral improvement. For moral progress is a question of fact. We must seek our test for its validity in the actual history of morality rather than in metaphysics.

Of all the moral philosophers the hedonists have doubtless suggested the measure of moral progress that has appealed most strongly to the masses of men. " A constant and steady attempt to get rid of the misery-causing, and to encourage the happiness-causing activities ", says Stephen, " is the condition of all moral progress. In order to modify any moral law or any social arrangement, we try to show that it actually causes some misery, and that its modification would produce more happiness. I do not see that any other mode of argument has ever any real efficiency. The actual progress in morality is always determined at every point by utilitarian considerations ". To this it may be replied that happiness, in the sense of " pleasure and the absence of pain ", is always an indication of a real or imagined well-being. The function of feeling is to furnish this immediate indication of organic welfare. But, as Green has shown in the case of his hedonistic

[1] T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 203.

drunkard, this feeling of the agreeable gives us no hint of the moral worth of the state that elicits it nor does it provide any reliable criterion for comparing this experience with others past or future.

This limitation of hedonism has been acknowledged by some of the leading defenders of this philosophy. "The common rule", says Stephen, "is that each organism is better as it obeys the conditions of health, but we cannot find any common rule upon the happiness, the standard of which changes as the organism itself changes". As new desires or new habits are acquired, the feelings of the agreeable that accompany these function in new situations with new ends. The most that the hedonist can claim, therefore, is, "Given a certain stage of social development, the society will be in a healthier state and the general happiness greater in proportion as it is moral. But since the happiness itself changes as the society develops, we cannot compare the two societies at different stages as if they were more or less efficient machines for obtaining an identical product".[1]

§ 3. Insight and Moral Progress

The most indisputable evidences of moral advancement are found by many in our better understanding of what the moral problem involves.[2] The first step towards the solution of the moral problem, as Socrates saw long since, is insight or the intellectual grasp of what the problem means. We need not go as far as did this great teacher and identify insight with the very essence of the moral situation. But obviously an understanding of the content of the moral experience is a decided gain to the moral reformer. We have but to compare modern scientific formulations of the ethical categories with those of the Greeks to see how great that advance has been. The many intensive and critical analyses of the moral life which are now at our disposal do not assure moral progress in the absolute sense. Knowledge of righteousness is

[1] *The Science of Ethics*, pp. 354 f.
[2] Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 34 f., Fowler, *Progressive Morality*, p. 81.

not a guarantee of greater righteousness in human affairs. It enlightens us as to what moral progress means and places in our hands more efficient instruments for its attainment.

Moral insight grows through moral experience. Moral wisdom is the accumulated and chastened knowledge gained through contacts with men and things. History shows that men get a better understanding of moral questions directly in proportion to the richness and variety of the demands made upon them for social adjustment. The test of the truth of moral ideas must be sought in the extent to which they enable men in a given social situation to eliminate their differences and to attain the most harmonious and fruitful human relationships. The social conscience is true and worthwhile in so far as it makes possible the best social equilibrium. By observing, therefore, how moral sentiment is formed on any issue, how it functions, and what factors are involved, we may understand the relationship of insight to moral progress.

Dicey thus describes the rise of the moral sentiment which has found expression in England during the last few decades in a remarkable series of legislative acts bettering the status of the worker. "For the last sixty years and more, the needs and sufferings of the poor have been thrust upon the knowledge of the middle-class Englishman. There are persons still living who can recall the time when about sixty years ago the *Morning Chronicle* in letters on London Labour and the London Poor revealed to the readers of high-class, and then dear, newspapers the miserable conditions of the poor wage-earners of London. These letters at once aroused the sympathy and called forth the aid of Maurice and the Christian Socialists. For sixty years novelists, newspaper writers, and philanthropists have alike brought the condition of the poor constantly before the eyes of their readers or disciples. The desire to ease the sufferings, to increase the pleasures, and to satisfy the best aspirations of the mass of wage-earners has become a marked characteristic of the wealthy class of Englishmen. This sentiment of active good will, stimulated no

doubt by ministers of religion, has spread far and wide among laymen, e.g., lawyers, merchants, and others not specially connected with any one religious, theological, or political party".[1]

To this process of gradual organization of public sentiment through conscious reflection, suggestion, example, and otherwise must be added other factors. The triumph of the machine process and the rise of the great modern industrial order gave birth to a feeling of social solidarity and interdependence of public and private, of individual and corporate interests. This sense of solidarity was heightened by the spread of the spirit of freedom and of democracy through the emancipation of the slave and the extension of Parliamentary suffrage. The moral atmosphere was further intensified by many cross-currents, such as the growing industrial discontent, the rise of trade unions, the clash of the socialistic movement with time honored *laissez faire* doctrines, increased taxation and the inherent antagonisms between traditional democracy and collectivism.

By what criteria do we adjudge this to be a case of moral progress? (a) In its last analysis moral progress is a matter of social adjustment. The outstanding trait of the status of the worker was social maladjustment. In this felt need of a better social equilibrium lies the very *fons et origo* of the moral problem. Moral progress is primarily a matter of its elimination. (b) The agency through which this social adjustment takes place is reason. Social pressure compelled discussion and reflection resulting in deeper insight into the problem. The function of reason is to further adjustment, to ward off evil, to preserve the integrity of the individual or the social organism. Reason has banished witchcraft, mastered disease, alleviated pain, softened the rigors of climate, prevented famine and pestilence. What reason has accomplished in furthering adjustment to the physical environment is but an earnest of greater things to be done in the control of social forces. As a factor in moral progress reason's rôle is three-

[1] *Opt. cit.*, p. LXII.

fold. It must socialize human conduct by pointing the way to the subordination of narrow individual interests to comprehensive social interests; it must ennoble life in the old Aristotelian sense of making supreme the distinctively human note; above all it must help us to introduce into all our activities sweet reasonableness. (c) The third factor in the problem of the status of the worker in English society was that of irrationality as seen in the stupid pull and haul of social forces, an irrationality that persists even in the face of the conquests of reason. For an irrational element, whether due to human stupidity or to the inherent constitution of things, always dogs the skirts of every great social issue. There was no group of individuals in England who had set about maliciously to persecute and oppress the worker. The lamentable conditions of the wage-earners had come about for the most part through the sheer stress of social forces. The social process is the result of a vast complex of forces, directed in part by the will of man, but moving forward also in part glacier-like, through the sheer irrational urge of its own ponderous inertia. Men are always faced with change, a ceaseless and inevitable social flux. Society, like all living things, is never static. What is the significance of change for the problem of moral progress?

§ 4. The Inevitableness of Change

It must be remarked first that change is inevitable. So much did this impress Heraclitus, and his modern disciple Bergson, that they make change the essence of reality. The inevitableness of change appears even in the sphere of morals. Where we deal with active and intelligent wills every act, good or bad, brings about a need for readjustment. For every act that is not purely habitual or instinctive causes a dislocation of our relations to other people and makes necessary the establishment of a new equilibrium. The dislocating effects of our acts move through society as ripples move over the surface of a lake, the more socially significant the act the larger the disturbance. A community of active, moral beings assures to us, therefore, a mobile rather than a static moral order. The

more strong willed and active the members of the community the greater the dynamic character of the moral situation.

Change, then, is inherent in the very structure of the moral life. Every good act ceases to be a good act by virtue of its performance. It passes from the realm of moral effort into the past and becomes a moral fact. Time, in ethics as elsewhere, makes ancient good uncouth. For the sheer sequence of events creates moral maladjustments. On the heels of the good act completed rise new moral issues. The good act at any one stage is the one that is most successful in restoring the disturbed equilibrium though the goodness of this act becomes superfluous and antiquated the moment it is consummated. The new elements in the situations they have created prevent us from repeating mechanically the good acts of yesterday. The ethical significance of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation lay in the fact that at that particular stage it met the political and moral needs of a distraught nation. But the freeing of the slave gave rise to many new issues in connection with reconstruction in which further acts of this sort were superfluous. Moral progress, therefore, need not be taken in any absolute sense of approximation to a perfectly righteous society. The morally "better" is that which meets more successfully than old ideals the demands of the immediate and unique present for the adjustment of conflicting elements.

The inevitableness of change is illustrated also by the nature of the moral judgment whether we take it in the sense of the individual judgment or of the "organic social judgment" pronounced by the social conscience. The predicate of every judgment is composed of an organized body of moral sentiments accumulated through past experience. In the case of the social conscience this common organization of moral sentiments functions as the element of control in the judgment; it provides the measure of values. But every judgment that is in any sense critical and constructive involves the integration of new elements of experience with this mass of organized sentiments by which the new data are judged. In the very act of pronouncing judgment, therefore, the social

conscience is modified; it is forced to adjust itself to new elements. This new synthesis, then, furnishes a point of departure for the criticism of older loyalties and thus creates a new series of problems. Men become conscious of social maladjustments that were unknown before. Moral progress is primarily a matter of the progressive awareness of social injustices.

The great ideals of justice, that first found expression in American democracy in the bills of rights, the Declaration and finally the Constitution, were limited to political rights affecting the whites only and those for the most part of the property-owning group. Lecky alludes sarcastically to "the grotesque absurdity of slave-owners signing a Declaration of Independence which asserted the inalienable right of every man to liberty and equality". Only a few men like Jefferson felt the moral inconsistency. But in time, as the life of the nation became more intense and the issue was drawn between the free industrial democracy of the North and the aristocratic white-man democracy of the South, the implications of the earlier principles of freedom were applied in an increasingly conscious and critical fashion to the wrong of slavery. Later the spirit of humanitarianism and of social justice born of the struggle with slavery furnished a new point of departure in the struggle for industrial democracy, the rights of woman and the child-worker, the elimination of the drink evil and the white slave traffic. It is literally true that the social conscience of a nation rises on the stepping stones of its dead selves to higher things.

§ 5. Change and Irrationality

It would seem, therefore, that change is an ineradicable element. Is it inimical to moral progress? Change pure and simple is not necessarily an evil. It is the irrational, the uncontrollable, the unpredictable element in change that is the arch enemy of all progress of whatever kind. It must be admitted frankly that there is a sense in which the irrational and the uncontrollable seem to belong to the eternal

order of things. The vast shifts of population that flooded the decadent civilization of ancient Rome were directly responsible for the confusion and moral retrogression that followed, and yet the blame cannot be laid at the door of human stupidity and lack of foresight. The conditions of moral betterment are often sorely jeopardized by storm, earthquake, disease, changes in food supply, sudden social upheavals, or unforeseen alterations in the manner of life. These forces lie, for the most part, beyond human control and are a fruitful source of uncertainty and confusion.

Even in the sphere of human endeavor moral progress is affected by elements that seem to escape our control. Man, as an intelligent and creative being, is constantly liberating forces, initiating movements, the results of which he cannot foresee or even direct. It can hardly be said that the far-reaching effects upon the morals of England of the nineteenth century of the inventions of Hargreaves, Cartwright, Watts, and others, that made possible the industrial revolution, were even faintly imagined by the inventors. How far were the moral sentiments of North and South on the slavery issue the result of cold logic and how far the product of unforeseen and largely irrational forces? But for the unforeseen invention of the cotton gin and improvements in cotton manufacture and the consequent opening up to slavery of the great southwestern area now known as the "black belt", the economic and social forces at work at the beginning of the nineteenth century would have paved the way to the peaceable emancipation of the slave.

Even within the strictly ethical sphere ideals and plans for reform, after they have once gained acceptance and social headway, seem to work out their own results under the pressure of circumstances. Ethical ideals have a way of escaping from the logical straitjackets of their original formulation. The slow trituration of the social process succeeds in time in breaking down their logical shell. They often become distorted through the sheer pull and haul of social and economic forces. The doctrine of natural rights, for example, provided Charles

Sumner with a philosophical basis for his philippics against slavery and finally registered themselves in the war amendments. The fourteenth amendment, however, which was intended to be the Magna Charta of the freedman has in reality profited him little but has served as a bulwark behind which large corporate interests have sought legal refuge against the various attempts at state regulation. The classic phrases of this famous amendment, " No state shall abridge the privileges or deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law ", are now imbued with a litigious atmosphere, centering around the economic rights and privileges of big business, that is utterly foreign to the original spirit and intent of the amendment.

The irrational element is still further accentuated through the sheer unwillingness or incapacity of the average citizen to reduce to some sort of logical order his heterogeneous collection of principles, axioms, traditional loyalties, and habits of thought that have been accumulated from past experience with public issues. Hence the social conscience at any one stage is never a clear-cut body of ideas and sentiments with a definite purpose and logical coherence. It is composed in the average individual of a complex of currents and cross currents into which enter local prejudices, traditional political and business axioms, religious loyalties and countless fixed and stubborn ideas on every imaginable subject. Only in rare cases is this *moles indigesta* subjected to keen criticism and analysis and reduced to logical consistency. Every politician, educator, minister, or public leader soon learns the power of these subtle, obdurate and yet for the most part unreasoning " sets " that run through the public sentiment of a community; to challenge them is to encourage the shipwreck of all one's ambitions. It would seem indeed that the great mass of men take on passively the " mental patterns " that are peculiar to the great social institutions or the *Zeitgeist* of their age.

Few are even conscious of the logical inconsistencies, the ethical paradoxes that characterize their ideas on public

issues. There is possibly no more homogeneous, intelligent and progressive nation than modern England. But Sidney Webb thus characterizes the state of mind of the average Englishman, trained in individualistic traditions and yet living in a community tending towards collectivism: "The Individualist Town Councillor will walk along the municipal pavement, lit by municipal gas and cleansed by municipal brooms with municipal water, and seeing by the municipal clock in the municipal market, that he is too early to meet his children coming from the municipal school hard by the county lunatic asylum and municipal hospital, will use the national telegraphy system to tell them not to walk through the municipal park but to come by the municipal tramway, to meet him in the municipal reading room, by the municipal art gallery, museum, and library, where he intends to consult some of the national publications in order to prepare his next speech in the municipal town-hall, in favor of the nationalization of canals and the increase of the government control over the railway system. 'Socialism sir,' he will say, 'don't waste the time of a practical man by your fantastic absurdities. Self-help, sir, individual self-help, that's what's made our city what it is".[1]

§ 6. Change and Moral Responsibility

How far are these irrationalities of the social conscience that hinder progress due to the failure of men to reflect and how far are they inevitable and unavoidable? Reason is prone to point the way to ethical ends that seem entirely logical and feasible. Men, however, under pressure of the uncontrollable forces of the actual social situation modify or reject their original ideals, or substitute those entirely different. Is there, then, an inevitable gap that we cannot bridge between the moral ideal and the irrational and uncontrollable elements of actual experience?

It may be observed, first, that where irrational or uncontrollable elements are obviously integral and necessary elements in the situation we have no choice but to make a place

[1] *Socialism in England*, p. 116 f.

for them in our ethical scheme. Probably the most convincing argument for the ethical justification of profitism is that there is always present to some degree in every form of business enterprise an element of uncertainty or of business risk. Profits are the legitimate incentive that must be held out to encourage capital to face this risk and thus ensure the development of natural resources, the accumulation of wealth and the extension of the material basis of civilization. Certainly the uncontrollable and dangerous elements connected with the life of the steeple-jack are good ethical grounds for demanding high pay. The ethical objection to gambling does not lie, as the good Calvinist once imagined, in the sacrilegious and immoral repudiation of the eternal and rational order of God's Providence, but in the capitalization of the element of chance in the interest of unjust gains. It is one thing to exaggerate and play with the element of chance; it is something quite different to rationalize it and give it a legitimate place in moral conduct. Could the roulette board and Wall Street be reduced to a science they would lose their attraction for the gambler.

It may be remarked in the second place, however, that all changes which are in any way moral are also rational. The sheer pressure of the forces of nature or haphazard social adjustments can never solve moral problems. To be sure, the costly processes of natural selection have built up ways of group behavior among the gregarious animals that make for social welfare but they are not moral. The delicate fabric of the moral order as we know it in human society would be destroyed long before this slow and wasteful process of social selection could accomplish its work. We need intelligence to expedite the process; rationality and morality are commensurate. History, indeed, seems to indicate that the presence of the rational element is always responsible for rapidity and soundness of moral advance. The masses of the negroes, either as slaves or freedmen, have never felt the injustice of their condition so much as their more enlightened champions. The peasantry of the *ancien régime*

that cumbered the fields of France like cattle and provided Rousseau with the texts for his tirade against civilization were not primarily responsible for the French Revolution. It was among the more intelligent citizenry of Paris and other communities who were not so bitterly oppressed as the peasantry but who felt the oppression more that the spark of revolution was first kindled. It would seem, then, that a measure of intelligence and information even more than the dumb pressure of wrongs is necessary to the development of an enlightened social conscience. Where this enlightenment is lacking the social conscience ceases to be a dynamic factor for progress and men and women endure their wrongs with far greater patience and docility. It would be absurd to suggest that the citizens of the progressive democracies of Australia and New Zealand were suffering from want or oppression. Yet socialistic legislation and experiments are more in evidence here than anywhere else among English-speaking peoples. It would seem that a moderate wrong, the nature of which is clearly grasped, may form the basis for reform while great evils, the nature of which is not understood, will be endured with meekness.

We must remember, however, that reason with its insistent demand for logical finality is always in danger of defeating its own ends. For reason would proceed from the *status quo* straight to some distant end that would seem to be the logical implication of the present stage of development. To get such logical finality, however, we must ignore the contingencies that are constantly emerging where we have to do with living things. Human life, so far as we are able to understand it, does not march straight to its goal in terms of the logical implications of the stage to which we have just attained. Actual moral experience is always more or less of a compromise with our ideals owing to the presence of unforeseen factors and the eternal adventurousness of life itself. It would seem, then, that at best the strictly logical element in the formulation of the moral ideal should be cast in such broad and tentative form as to provide for the unforeseen contingencies of a growing and

expanding social order. Only in some such fashion as this are we able to formulate the ethical ends so that they will be serviceable in meeting the immediate moral issues as they arise from day to day. Even then unavoidable confusion and complexity will necessitate compromises in which we seem to have sacrificed the real purpose of the ideal.

Shall we say, then, that compromise is the last word on the problem of moral progress? Compromise is an ethically unpalatable term. It is piecemeal morality, the attaining of righteousness bit by bit. But justice is immediate, categorical, absolute in its demands. It does not admit of temporizing or compounding with wrong. Is not the strength of the moral ideal found in its authoritativeness? It is well to remember, however, that compromise has its virtues as well as its vices. It proceeds from the fundamental conviction that the ideal is not more precious than the integrity and permanence of the social order itself. The principle of *fiat justitia ruat coelum* is self-contradictory. The very existence of the moral life itself demands the continuity of a sane and healthful social order. Only through compromise can this unbroken continuity of ethical tradition be preserved Through compromise the ethical ideal undergoes a constant process of selection and criticism and adaptation to the particular issue. This ensures real moral progress by keeping in the closest possible touch with the demands and capacities of the social situation. It has been said that the test of a great statesman is " the capacity for honestly sharing the varying, and even inconsistent, sentiments of his age ". And the same may be said to a certain extent of the successful moral reformer.

§ 7. The Nature of the Moral Ideal

A word must be devoted to a more exact definition of the notion of social equilibrium which we have suggested as the measure of moral progress. The first of modern moralists to formulate a notion of moral progress that would harmonize with the principle of evolution was Herbert Spencer.

The famous Spencerian definition of life as "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations" includes of course the moral economy. For Spencer, therefore, moral progress must be a continuous approximation to an organization of our powers which will make possible a perfect adjustment to environment. The good life is a development towards an equilibrium, not a stable equilibrium but a "moving equilibrium". The ideal will be attained when we have the completely adapted man in a completely evolved society. For a "complete life in a complete society is another name for complete equilibrium between the coördinated activities of each social unit and those of the aggregate units".[1]

Since we have not yet attained the completely adapted man in the completely evolved society the stage of goodness actually reached must be "relative" as compared with the goodness possible under the "absolute" conditions of a completely evolved society. The best attainable goodness is the conduct that is *least wrong* and we know that we have attained the least wrong conduct when we act in such a way as to secure the greatest amount of pleasure.

The weakness of Spencer's conception of moral progress lies not in his notion of a mobile equilibrium but in his artificial and mechanical conception of the absolute moral good. The assumption that our best acts under the existing conditions of a relative ethic are only those acts that are *least wrong* implies the possibility of comparing our present conduct with conduct under the ideal conditions of the completely evolved social order. But what those conditions of a completely evolved social order are, we can only surmise. It is only through the immediate experiences of the present that we can formulate our ideal of the moral good. Since future experiences imply situations which are beyond our control and hence unpredictable we can never dogmatize as to the nature of the absolute good. Constantly accumulating experience forces us to reorganize again and again our conception of the good. The moral ideal grows with and through experience; it

[1] *Data of Ethics*, sec. 28.

is not a fixed and far distant goal which we are slowly approximating.

Spencer's conception of the moral good suffers, furthermore, from the fundamental weakness of his philosophy. In his thought the living and striving organism is always subjected more or less to a fixed and mechanically determined environment. But the individual in adjusting himself to the environment not only suffers change himself but also modifies his environment. Every moral act affects in some way the characters of our fellows so that in the very act of adjusting ourselves to them we change them and create for ourselves a new environment for future adjustments. In this wise the meaning as well as the content of the moral ideal grows with the accumulations of moral experience and is conditioned by this experience.

A little reflection will show that the Spencerian formula of a "completely adapted man in a completely evolved society" really makes for ethical relativism and contradicts the immediate witness of the moral experience itself. For if the only feasible moral goodness is the least wrong act or the act that under the circumstances best approximates to the absolute goodness of the ideal moral order, then our best endeavors are only partially right and our best interpretation of the moral ideal is necessarily limited by the imperfect stage of social evolution we have attained. Such a situation if true would inevitably detract from the force of the moral imperative. No such detraction, however, is felt in the facts of the moral experience. The moral sanction speaks to us in terms of the immediate social situation and not in terms of a completely evolved social order to be attained generations or millenniums hence. It is what we can do here and now that conditions the moral problem and those conditions are for us absolute. In every moral issue there is some one course that is eternally and absolutely right in the sense that it and it alone satisfies the moral demands made upon us by the concrete situation.

The good of each age, therefore, must be final and absolute

for that age because the moral good becomes intelligible and real as a result of social adjustment, the achievement of social equilibrium. When that adjustment has been made the moral good it embodies is absolute. For the stage to which we have attained in moral evolution, when taken in the light of the past, is final upon the whole question as to the meaning of the good. We do not know what the future may bring forth; we are able to anticipate possible future modifications of the ideal only in terms of the present. There is, therefore, an absolute morality in the sense that the ideal met in making social adjustments in a given situation are final for that situation and will always remain so since the facts involved are unique and without a parallel in what precedes and follows. Looked at in one way, to be sure, it would appear that the ideal is relative because from the nature of the case it is conditioned by the situation in which it functions. With reference to other situations it may be more or less perfect. But reflection will show that its relativity is but the obverse side of its absoluteness. The more definitely it is related to a certain social situation the more final and absolute it becomes. On the other hand, the more completely and absolutely a moral value is realized in a given situation the more speedily will it become antiquated and give place to new values.

This condition of mobile equilibrium, of relative absoluteness in the moral ideal, may be viewed in two ways, the individual and the social, though it is evident that the mobile equilibrium felt by the individual is but a phase of the larger mobile equilibrium of the social order. From one point of view the good act is one which is adjusted to an ordered series of individual activities; from another point of view the good act is one that secures for the individual proper adjustment to an order of persons. The balance of powers that evidences moral worth in the individual is directly dependent upon the extent to which this balance reflects the higher equilibrium of the community of which he is a part. It is obvious that where such a highly equilibrated social order does not exist it will hardly be possible to develop the highest type of character. The social

setting in this sense seems to predetermine the limits of moral perfection for the individual.

The way in which the individual through systematizing and harmonizing his own powers in contact with his fellows adds his contribution to the solution of the ultimate problem of social equilibrium has been well stated by Alexander: "In the endeavor to satisfy the claims of one another, it is discovered experimentally that a certain arrangement of observances or sentiments, allows a certain number of persons to live together without disintegration from without, and without friction from within, while other persons or other courses of action can neither be got to fit into this arrangement, nor into any stable arrangement. This first set of persons are good, their approval stamps with the character of goodness the actions which they themselves practise; while they stamp with disapproval the actions which are practiced by those who are not of their number, and these are bad. Good men and the moral ideal which formulates their desires are determined together, and the objection which overlooks this process falls to the ground." [1] The good man, therefore, in attaining the ideal reproduces in his own character those traits demanded by the community for the preservation of its own life. In other words, the moral values of any age or group are those types of character, those traits of disposition, those affective attitudes which are at a premium in that group or age because they fit in with and satisfy the group's need for social equilibrium and continued existence. It follows, of course, that under changed group conditions, demanding for social stability other phases of character, the moral values will undergo corresponding modifications. The ignoring of this fundamental principle has introduced much confusion and arbitrariness into our conception of the moral life.

[1] *Mind*, 1892, p. 46.

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PART III

THE SOCIAL ORDER

CHAPTER XII

THE RÔLE OF THE INSTITUTION IN THE MORAL ECONOMY

§ 1. The Institution as the Moral Educator

The Greeks, with their characteristic fondness for attributing to the semi-mythical sages of the past the accumulated wisdom of the present, tell the story of an early philosopher who was asked by an anxious father the best way to train his son. The sage's reply was, " Make him a citizen of the state with the best laws ". This suggests at once the profoundly important part played by the institution in shaping the form and content of character. Social institutions are the great educators because they supply the settled modes of behavior, the relatively fixed forms of social evaluation, so necessary for that disciplining of the individual with which all education begins. The socially valuable institution educates because in its last analysis its influence is mental and moral rather than material. It is not the brick and mortar of the state capitol, town-hall, or church edifice, it is not the pulleys and lathes and dynamos of the mill, it is not the solemn panels, dusty tomes, and red-sealed documents of the law-court, it is not the physical fireside and all the material domestic equipment of the home that form the essence of these social institutions. That is to be sought in the habits of thought, the forms of feeling, the ways of acting which find in building, machine, written ordinance, or home circle their points of attachment. All the visible forms and material instrumentalities of an institution have meaning

and value only as they are associated with reasoning, feeling, striving human beings.

It is obvious, therefore, that an intelligent, thoroughly organized and socially efficient social conscience is directly dependent upon the character of our social institutions. Almost a century ago DeTocqueville could say, "The free institutions which the inhabitants of the United States possess, and the political rights of which they make so much use, remind every citizen, and in a thousand ways, that he lives in society. They every instant impress upon his mind the notion that it is the duty as well as the interest of men, to make themselves useful to their fellow-creatures." To-day critics of the social order trace the present chaotic condition of public sentiment and our disconcerting inability to cope with problems to the lack of moral and intellectual molds for giving definite shape to the loyalties of men. It is difficult, even impossible, to say to-day what American public opinion is upon such matters as divorce, the political and economic status of women, child labor, birth control, municipal ownership, state control of big business, and many other burning issues. Those institutions that should provide us with a disciplined and enlightened public sentiment on these matters have failed us.

We have no reason to suppose that a democracy any more than other forms of society can dispense with the principle of social control and the moral discipline that are afforded through institutions. For public sentiment, democracy's court of last resort upon great issues, is in a large measure the institutionalization of the social experience of the past. Prevailing norms of thought and action are reflected in institutions. The individual must utilize these traditions as his indispensable means of dealing with men and things. He must feel, reason, and act according to the pre-determined forms of national and even racial experience. He is dependent upon the result of an age-long process of social selection and he has no choice but to accept the results of this selective process. The implications of these general statements will be clearer if we con-

sider more in detail the relation of the individual to the institution.

§ 2. Evolution of the Self within the Institutional Setting

We may distinguish four stages by which the individual in the home-circle gradually lives himself into the moral economy and achieves a character by making himself social and solid with his fellows. At the lowest level we have purely instinctive behavior with the more or less accidental modifications of these reactions through contact with the external world. This is succeeded by a pleasure-pain economy where impulse and instinct are partially socialized through a system of rewards and punishments in the social environment and especially in the family. Here the beginnings are made for socially valuable habits. In the third stage, the percept and mental image of the person or social situation together with the elements of social praise or blame associated with them provide the measure of values. It has sometimes been called the " I'll tell teacher " stage. The stuff of the moral situation is still concrete and personal and there are few generalizations. In the fourth and last stage, the moral ideal is oriented in terms of ethical norms or general principles that are recognized as underlying the behavior of individuals. The measure of moral maturity, then, is found in the extent to which a definite ideal self as a phase of a larger social complex is built up and serves to control conduct. Ethics is concerned mainly with the form and function of this ideal social construct, the *socius*.

The development of this ideal self and its ethical implications pre-supposes other selves. The gregarious impulses, together with the ever-pressing necessity of adjusting himself to his fellows, force the child in the family and later in the " gang ", the school and other group relations to take over the " social copy " that is offered to him in the shape of the words and acts and ideas of his fellows. Other selves thus become possibilities for the development of his own self. His own self is to a very large extent the result of reinitiating and making

his own the subjective experiences of others whose " social copy " he acts out. In this wise the individual comes to understand himself in the process of entering more fully into the lives of others. The objective and external becomes subjective and personal. The meaning of the individual and personal is discovered in the process of assimilating the material provided by social contacts. It is obvious, therefore, that the individual is constantly passing over into the field of the social. The social is constantly being absorbed and built into the fabric of the individual. It is impossible to draw fixed and arbitrary lines of demarkation between the two. They are as integral parts of the total situation as are the dimensions of a cube.

The primary rôle in this process of rationalizing and socializing the individual's instinctive equipment and providing him with a moral self is played by that institution which is fundamental among all the institutions, namely, the home. The ethical ideals that actuate the mature members of the family-circle are not incorporated in the moral sentiments of the child primarily through reflection and critical analysis. For the most part it is social pressure that forces the child to take over the " social copy " presented to him by his associates. The youngster who attempts to reproduce in the family-circle the rôle of the bully which he found so interesting at school makes some important discoveries. In the first place, the acting out of the " social copy " offered by the words and acts of the bully makes vital and real in the inner life of the child the subjective experiences that accompany the acts of the bully. It is through this process of taking over and acting out his " social copy " that the child lives himself into the inner thought and life of his associates. In the second place, however, in this process of living himself into his world the child finds that certain acts meet with strenuous opposition while others are commended by the members of the family-circle. He is far from being able at first to give a rational explanation or definition of the principles upon which the family-circle pronounces these judgments. They appear to him primarily as

immediate brute fact to which he must adjust himself. His obedience is based largely upon the pleasure-pain economy.

In time, however, as character and intelligence develop, the common attitudes, the principles of behavior, the subtle organizations of sentiments of the family-circle register themselves in the child's own nature. The immediate and unremittent pressure of the economy of the family group necessitates an organization of his sentiments in accord with the spirit of the family group. Here we have the beginnings of the social conscience so far as the individual is concerned. And here also we have the reason for saying that the family is the fundamental social institution. It takes precedence over all others because of its unparalleled opportunities for molding the sentiments, creating habits of thought, forming standards of values through which the individual orients himself on all ethical issues. With the widening of his circle of experience this original and fundamental body of sentiments organized under the influence of the family is modified through contact with other institutions such as the school, the church, the state, or the business establishment. But those impressions made in the formative stage of childhood remain of fundamental importance. Even the radical who imagines that he has emancipated himself entirely from earlier conservative influences of the home-circle will find his radicalism would be inexplicable without this earlier conservative background.

§ 3. Composite Nature of the Self

The self, then, is most intimately related to the institution of which the home is the typical example. This relation we may illustrate by that which exists between the vine and the trellis that supports it. The vine appropriates the fixed framework of the trellis as the immediate and necessary instrument for realizing the impulse to grow and expand inherent in all living things. The demands of the life impulse are of more pressing and practical importance than the accidental form of the trellis. But at the same time the vine in achieving its own life takes on the form of the trellis. As the vine develops and

approaches maturity the peculiarities of the structure of the trellis must inevitably become more and more integral parts of the life of the vine. The condition of the vine's fulness of life is a more or less complete surrender to the leadings of the trellis. Of course vine and trellis never become organically one as is often the case with individual and institution. For in a sense the institution only has reality in so far as it is a modification of the thought and conduct of individuals. Institution and individual cannot be separated except in thought In this sense the illustration of vine and trellis falls short of the reality.

The illustration of vine and trellis fails also to bring out another most important fact in connection with the relation of the self to the institutional setting. Each vine has its own trellis and hence lives its own more or less unique and fixed life. The self, however, appropriates many social institutions. Its life overflows and demands, especially in the case of the rich and many-sided self, all the possibilities for growth that society can offer. The self thus transcends the institution. Human life even in the case of the most mediocre individual includes values, aspirations, spiritual and moral needs, that no one institution can ever satisfy. This fact of the superabundant life of the self has important consequences. The self at its highest levels is forced to seek its realization independent of the mechanical institutional structure of society. The moral self must become the master of its own destiny, the architect of its own fortune. It is compelled to become a sovereign moral entity. The very exigencies of its life demand that it emancipate itself from the dogmatism, the authoritarianism, the partiality, the mechanical inflexibility of the institution. It is at this higher level of the creative and autonomous moral self that the problem of the relation of the individual to the social emerges in its sharpest form. How far is this highest self purely a matter of individual feelings and will attitudes and to what extent can we claim for it reality as a social entity?

If we take a segment of the mature moral self we detect several phases. At the lowest level lie the various institutional

selves. They include relatively fixed habits of thought and action. They are for the most part narrow and mechanical in their scope and belong to the general category of group morality. Every individual shows traces of several institutional selves. There is the self of the home, the church, the office, or the club. They have their ethical norms, their definite habitudes of the sentiments. Often these institutional selves exist side by side in the constitution of the same individual with relatively little influence upon each other. At a higher level we have what we may call the super-institutional self. It is much more comprehensive, more subtle, and unstable than the institutional selves. It includes that phase of the self each is forced to develop by virtue of the fact that his life always transcends the local institutional self. For the individual whose interests are associated with the various social groups and institutions is nevertheless a unity. The demand for personal integrity forces him to unify his experiences at a higher level. The exigencies of the moral life demand, therefore, the creation of a super-institutional self.

This super-institutional self has its individual as well as its more social phases, though, strictly speaking, the individual and the social are merely terms applied to phases of one whole of experience. At the heart of the super-institutional self lie the comprehensive ethical norms that are more or less common to all the various institutional selves. These are the general principles of action insisted upon for the maintenance of a healthful and enduring community life and include the norms regarded as basic in the moral economy of any given age. It is with these norms that we are concerned primarily in the study of the social conscience. We have seen that they vary with the shifts of the stresses and strains of the social order; they do not always occupy the same place in the scale of moral values of different periods. The super-institutional self of each individual always includes some of these norms. An enlightened and socialized character will include many of these norms. An individual completely and rationally socialized would be an epitome of the social conscience. Regard for a minimum of

these ethical principles is necessary to living peacefully with our fellows; the individual who repeatedly violates the right of property, for example, is speedily isolated; one who disregards human life may be eliminated entirely.

These norms of the super-institutional self function almost automatically in conventional moral judgments. When one owes a just debt and the time for payment arrives, in a vigorous moral character the mass of sentiments organized in terms of the norm of business honesty assert themselves almost automatically. The debt is paid and the element of obligation hardly enters consciously into the situation. Similarly where the issue involved is of a civic character that falls easily within the habitual ways of thinking and acting, a public duty may be performed in the same automatic fashion as in the case of the matter of private morality. For the social conscience is felt mainly in the application by the individual of those general ethical norms he shares with the rest of the better elements of the community, to an issue involving the good of all. The question as to whether a moral judgment is individual or social is primarily a question of the content of the subject rather than the predicate of the judgment.

This social phase of the super-institutional self is to be differentiated, however, from the more intimate and personal phases of the moral experience that are best illustrated in cases of conscience. The case of conscience is always accompanied by a sense of increased strain and mental uneasiness due to the fact that habitual and ready-made organizations of sentiments cannot be readily brought to bear on the problem. The situation, furthermore, is one usually that involves the self in its entirety or the master sentiment. This is seen in the fact that reflection is much more in evidence in cases of conscience than in the habitual moral decisions. In the latter case an "apperceiving mass" of sentiments and ideas functions immediately and without mental effort in sanctioning or rejecting the proposed act. In the case of conscience, however, the mind must canvass the entire situation and weigh the pros and cons. This often involves an entire

recasting of existing systems of sentiments or at least a critical survey of the self and the pronouncement of judgment in terms of the new mental synthesis that is thus created. This explains the feeling of isolation always felt in debating cases of conscience. The uniqueness and personal nature of the problem set the individual off from his fellows. He often finds himself at variance with the conventional sanctions of the community. For it is at this higher level of individual morality that new moral values are coined and points of departure are secured for moral progress.

§ 4. The Relation of Institutional and Individual Selves to the Social Conscience

Some of our most serious moral problems arise in connection with the relations between the social conscience, the institutional selves, and the intimate or private self. We have seen that the institutional selves play a most important rôle in shaping the social conscience. In the past the institutional self more than often dominated the situation entirely. The self shaped by the discipline of the church during the middle ages, for example, provided a broad schematic form within which the social and individual conscience developed. The same may be said of those theocratic forms of society that arose in Geneva, Scotland, and New England under the Calvinistic régime. The moral life was thoroughly institutionalized by church forms and dogmas that provided the source of authority and the measure of values in political, social, or business relations as well as in matters purely religious. In more recent times the state as developed under Prussian absolutism provided an illustration of a national morality that was cast for the most part in the mould of the political institutional self. For a while it seemed that the " big business " corporation was destined to play a similar rôle in American life.

In more progressive states, however, and especially in American democracy, the institutional selves do not dominate the situation. This is due primarily to the spirit of democ-

cracy itself which will not be cribbed, cabined or confined in any such mechanical fashion. It is due also in no small degree to the sheer fact of the multiplication of the institutional selves. The complexity of our tense urban civilization and the richness and variety of the individual's activities tend to diminish materially the disciplinary effect of all institutions. Indeed in some of our large cities the tonic effect of a vigorous institutional life is almost entirely lacking. Consequently there is a feeling of inchoateness, of absence of conviction, and community of purpose most disconcerting to one interested in building up an intelligent and effective public sentiment. If history teaches us anything it is that without a vigorous and refined institutional life we can never hope to have an efficient public sentiment.

In the society of the future this complexity will in all probability increase rather than diminish. Could we bring every institution to recognize its possibilities for moral training this complexity might prove a help rather than a hindrance. For there is a uniqueness in the ethical quality of every institutional self that might be utilized to enrich the moral life. The church, for example, is in the position, as is no other institution, to stress the notes of brotherhood and the spiritual implications of the moral ideal. The university should cherish the intellectual virtues, the high and holy regard for truth that is the distinctive moral contribution of science. Office, shop, and mill offer a vast laboratory for discipline in the homelier virtues that are basic for business enterprise and industry. Every profession has its unique moral excellence. These various moral characteristics of the institutional self need of course to be fused into some sort of a unity by the sense of social responsibility. The church needs to realize, for example, that the mystical and idealistic phases of the moral peculiar to its institutional self must be strengthened and vitalized by scientific regard for the truth. Apart from the school and to a certain extent the home and the church, few institutions show any sense of responsibility for the type of self they are encouraging.

Serious problems have arisen in connection with the antagonisms between the institutional self and the intimate individual self. The institutional self, as the modern representative of the primitive group self or "tribal self," has always been opposed by the introspective individualistic self of reflective morality. Moral advance from the days of Socrates to the present has been made primarily through the emancipation of the private introspective self from the group self of tradition and authority. The triumphant individualism of American life is a manifestation of this individual self insisting upon its own self-sufficiency, its right to determine its own destiny. But Americans are coming to feel, as did Socrates faced with the emancipated youth of Athens, that this insistence upon the complete moral autonomy of the individual self is dangerous. An individualistic ethic has given us, to be sure, a sharpened sense of rights and duties, a deeper insight into the moral problem. But it has proven particularistic, fond of abstractions, relativistic, sceptical, even pessimistic in its attitude toward the moral ideal. It stands in need of the poise, the hopefulness, the consciousness of power gained through more intimate contact with the setting of institutional selves from which it has revolted.

Our immediate task is to take the enrichment of the moral experience, the deepened insight into moral truth gained by the individualistic self, and put them into use at the level of the institutional selves. The traditional group morality represented by the institutional self must be lifted to the level of the emancipated individual self. In this wise the individual self will regain that solidarity which it has lost and the institutional self will gain the enlightenment and moral sensitiveness it lacks.

CHAPTER XIII

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE INSTITUTION

§ 1. The Debt of the Individual to the Institution

By way of supplement to the more or less theoretical discussion of the foregoing chapter it may not be amiss to add some practical observations as to the relation of the individual and the institution. We have to ask first what is the debt of the individual to the institution? The individual is dependent upon the institution above everything else because it represents the accumulated wisdom of the nation and of the race. The institution occupied the stage long before the individual made his appearance. The institution, therefore, exhibits the traits of a gray-haired old man, namely, conservatism, the emphasis of authority and precedent, lack of plasticity, the dignity and poise born of ripe experience, and scorn for fads or thoughtless innovations. The institution is essentially paternalistic. Its measures of values are sought in the past rather than in the present. Just because of these traits the institution appears to childhood and immature youth to speak the final word of wisdom, to embody the sober and chastened knowledge of the race.

It should be remembered, however, that the sheer fact of social survival establishes no *a priori* claim to absolute finality for the institution. To assert of an institution that every part of it "has survived because it was in some sense the fittest"[1] is hardly justifiable. We thereby attribute to the constitution of society as a whole and to the process of evolution a fundamentally rational character which the facts do not warrant. It has been pointed out that emphasis of survival and the value of the selective process in social evo-

[1] Cooley, *Social Organization*, p. 320.

lution has been overdone.[1] Many institutions survive not because of their inherent value but because they occupy a protected position in the social order. Others represent the sheer inertia of social habits. Like glacial boulders on a New England farm they persist, not because they possess social utility or fit their environment, but because they are able to resist the disintegrating forces of the cosmic weather.

Even those who revolt against the institution thereby confess their debt to it. "All innovation is based upon conformity, all heterodoxy on orthodoxy, all individuality on solidarity". Paradox, to a certain extent, lies at the very heart of life. Augustine, while repudiating the institutions of the *civitas terrena* as utterly given over to sin and destruction, was unable to construct his *civitas dei* without smuggling in the logical framework of the pagan city-state he had condemned. Luther and the reformers, who used the individualistic and radical doctrine of justification by faith to pry the world loose from the decadent authoritarianism of the mediaeval church, found it necessary to substitute for the authority of the church the authority of the Book. The founders of American democracy vigorously rejected the political absolutism of kings only to find refuge under the metaphysical absolutism of the eighteenth century doctrine of a body of unalterable and inalienable human rights, the final definition of which was laid down in the Constitution.

§ 2. The Self-Made Man

There is deeply implanted in American life an antagonism to the institution. Since this antagonism is intimately connected with the lack of an efficient social conscience it merits a more detailed analysis. This anti-institutional bent appears in business and in the world of practical affairs in the glorification of the self-made man. The self-made man is the flower of American individualism and presupposes a background partly religious (Puritanism), partly political (natural rights),

[1] Folsom: "The Social Psychology of Morality," *The American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 23, p. 433 f.

partly economic (Adam Smith's economic man and the doctrine of "enlightened selfishness"), and partly the outgrowth of a first-hand struggle with the untamed forces of nature. The ethic of the self-made man assumes the autonomy of the individual. He is supposed not to stand in need of his fellows to attain his ends. Rather he bends them to serve his will. It follows from the philosophy of the self-made man that life is essentially a fight, a struggle with men who like oneself are trying to master other men and the machinery of the social order in their own interests. Hence the predominance of the militant virtues in the ethic of the self-made man. The worshipful man is the masterful man. This is a form of Nietzsche's *Uebermensch,* softened and disguised by a democratic environment. In those happy hunting-grounds of the self-made man, the world of business, it is by no means unusual to find the philosophy of *Wille-zur-Macht,* masquerading, to be sure, under the form of unrestricted competition.

But the self-made man's neglect of those values embodied in the institution exacts its penalty. It strips him of a sense of social responsibility, the indispensable lever for reform, the inspiration to social progress. Hence the example of the self-made man has encouraged in many Americans a state of mind that makes an effective social conscience impossible. For example, his individualistic idea of ownership threatens constantly to absorb or deny those social values for which the institution of property exits. Property has significance for the self-made man primarily because it is owned. Thus property values gain a local habitation and a name only as appanages of individual rights, as instruments for furthering private and individual ends.

Too often the higher spiritual, moral, or aesthetic values, the most precious heritage of the race, embodied in the institutional forms of civilization, have little or no place in the philosophy of the self-made man. For his claim to preëminence is based upon opposition to, or at least independence of, these values. To acknowledge that all the permanent achievements in the field of science, art, religion, or even of

industry are never the work of one man, is a confession of weakness and limitation.

Into the great Gothic cathedrals of northern France entered the religious aspirations and artistic genius of generations of men. The series of inventions that paved the way for the industrial revolution during the eighteenth century were the products of many brains. The perfecting and applying of scientific method to the problems of modern life were the joint achievement of three great European nations, France, England, and Germany. These enduring higher values, the joint creation of the past, lie safeguarded in political, scientific, and religious institutions, in the masterpieces of literary and plastic art. Slowly did they receive articulate form through the loyal and whole-hearted devotion of a great company of noble spirits that were inspired by the thought, "He that loseth his life shall find it". This sublime self-abnegation, this patient elimination of the hard and unlovely outcroppings of individuality, this merging of self into something that transcends self, or rather this rediscovery of self in the institution, the nation or the race—this attitude is one that the self-made man cannot understand. He cannot realize that his very claim to greatness is a confession of essential weakness and limitations. He fails to see that he is admired not for what he was able to do in opposition to man's institutional heritage but because of what he was able to do in spite of the unfortunate handicaps of environment, training, or what not, which prevented him from living the fuller and richer life he might have lived had he been able to make himself master of that heritage. In his case as well as in every other the institution, not the individual, provides the measure of values.

§ 3. The Limitations of the Institution

The institution, however, has its essential limitations. These arise out of its origin, structure, and function. Because it is traditional and affiliated with the past the institution is dogmatic and authoritarian. Hence, the institution is con-

stantly forced to compromise with new situations. It is ever seeking means to justify its ends. It is inclined to cultivate habits of casuistry. It is the arch opportunist. The institution seeks to give concrete and permanent form to spiritual and moral values, a task that is possible only to a limited degree, and thereby dooms itself to a partial, mechanical, even materialistic rôle in the social order. These are some of the original sins of the institution, "original" in the sense that they inhere in the very nature, origin, and function of the institution itself.

From the very nature and purpose of the institution it must assume its own inherent and enduring worth. For it is essentially autonomous; it does not look beyond itself for its justification. The very *raison d'être* of the institution lies in the fact that it sets itself in permanent opposition to the eternal flux of men and things. Its persistence, therefore, depends upon its claim to have isolated from the flux of immediate reality that which endures and defies change. Upon this service the institution bases its claim to the loyalty and obedience of men; to permit this to be challenged is for the institution to stultify its own existence. Hence there is a profound truth in the remark, "The supernatural is always a conceit of the institution". For the essence of the supernatural lies in its inscrutable and self-sufficient guarantee of the truth of its deliverances. "And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel". This is essentially the spirit of the institution towards those who seek its credentials.

The institution is the product of the past. It is the result of a slow process of organizing human experience, the crystallization of ideas, beliefs, customs, and conventions. The institution, therefore, is essentially backward-looking. It stands for economy. It saves the individual the embarrass-

ment that would result were he compelled to embark upon an uncharted sea of moral endeavor. It meets a very deep and a very real human need for a "Thus saith the Lord". But this fundamental need for authority, perhaps the chief justification of the institution, easily degenerates into dogmatism. Aristotle has said, "What seems to all men *is*". The institution is inclined to say, "What seems to me *is*". For dogmatism is merely the result of authority taking itself too seriously. When authority claims for itself absolute finality, when it makes the sweeping proclamation to all truth seekers, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy ladened and I will give you rest", and when finally it refuses to submit its credentials to criticism, it has become a menace rather than a help to the moral life.

The institution is limited by its structure which is partial, specialized, mechanical. To be sure, the institution overtops the individual; it outwatches him in the long flight of the years; it slowly accumulates, as he cannot, the chastened wisdom of generations. But the individual likewise surpasses the institution. For the institution can at best only accommodate a segment of personality. A vigorous and many-sided individual overflows and makes use of various institutions. It is in personality rather than in the institution that we find the wholeness of life. There is, therefore, a profound psychological truth underlying the phrase "soulless corporation". For every corporation or institution is but a mechanized fragment of personality. In fact the menace of corporations is just this combination of power with irresponsible impersonality.

Where the moral sensibilities of the individual or the community have been thoroughly institutionalized they reflect this partial, negative, and mechanical character. Institutional dominance of life inevitably dwarfs and deadens the sensibilities. Mechanism and moral enthusiasm are thoroughly incompatible. Intensity of action and mechanical efficiency are purchased at the price of narrowness of moral sympathies. Here we have the solution of some of the strange paradoxes

of history. It explains, for example, how institutionalized Christianity, though based upon the principle of love, was able to countenance the cruel and inhuman treatment of Jew, Moslem, or heretic with a perfectly clear conscience. The moral sensibilities of the Christians of the days of the Spanish Inquisition had taken on the hard and mechanical character of an institution according to which the burning of a heretic tended *ad majorem dei gloriam*. As we have seen in the chapter on the organization of the sentiments, the emotions and sentiments are conditioned by the central ideas, the institutional ideals around which they find organization.

From its nature and structure the institution tends to encourage a negative morality. It shapes the moral sensibilities of the individual in terms of "thou shalt nots". It sets metes and bounds for the moral will but rarely makes provisions for the free creative spontaneity of the unfolding moral life. The individual or the community trained under the heavy hand of a negative institutional morality is slowly but inevitably educated into a condition of moral impotence. For training in moral initiative alone assures resourcefulness in the face of unforeseen difficulties. Lecky thus describes the tragic straits to which the mediaeval man was reduced, schooled as he had been in the negative institutionalized morality of the church, when he faced the new movements of thought that finally culminated in the revival of learning: "Doubt was almost universally regarded as criminal, and error as damnable; yet the first was the necessary condition, and the second the probable consequence, of inquiry. Totally unaccustomed to independent reasoning, bewildered by vast and undefined fields of thought from which the opposing arguments were drawn; with a profound sense of the absolute necessity of a correct creed, and of the constant action of Satan upon the fluctuations of the will and of the judgment; distracted and convulsed by colliding sentiments, which an unenlightened psychology attributed to spiritual inspiration, and, above all, parched with a burning longing for certainty;

the minds of men drifted to and fro under the influence of the wildest terror ".[1] The inquisition and the witch-burnings at the close of the middle ages were but a final, desperate effort on the part of the institutionalized conscience to be self-consistent.

Perhaps the most subtle and dangerous effect of assimilating the conscience to the demands of the institution is that in time it creates a condition in which the individual comes unconsciously to identify the dictates of his own conscience with the demands of the institution. When the individual reaches that state in which he regards the beliefs and ideals of the institution as his own, the door of hope for his own moral emancipation is automatically closed. He has surrendered to the institution his right, together with his ability, to solve his moral problems. The process of institutionalization has been so subtle that he may still flatter himself that he is exercising his own sovereign moral will while in reality he merely wills what the institution wishes him to will. He is unable to break the closed circle because those powers upon which he must depend to achieve his freedom are so shaped and moulded that they find their highest joy and most sacred duty in doing the will of the institution.

We are forced to assume that something like this complete institutionalization of the national conscience took place in the case of the German people or else we are unable to explain their national attitude in the recent war and especially their treatment of conquered peoples. It is at least possible to find a parallel between the behavior of the German student who found relief from the stifling atmosphere of a Prussianized social order in the " intellectual anarchy " of Nietzsche and the behavior of the German soldier who found respite from the iron hand of the drill-sergeant by venting his undisciplined lust and brutality upon the people of Belgium. May not the fascination of Nietzsche's unbridled thought and the exultant atrocities wreaked on helpless women and chil-

[1] *History of the Rise and In uence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe,* Vol. I, p. 78 f.

dren be after all a most eloquent witness to the thoroughness of an institutionalization which reduced paternalistic Germany to a state of moral impotence? It should at least enable us to place the terrible load of responsibility upon the state, where it belongs, and not upon the individual soldier. "With his conscience drugged and his principles corrupted by a false and narrow patriotism which makes the supposed interests of the state his first and last concern, and which makes the cult of national hatred a vital part of his education, with his character brutalized and his will weakened by the relentless pressure of an over-rigid discipline, with his moral land-marks swept away by the enforced commission of inhuman crimes in obedience to the authority which furnishes him with his ideals as well as with his rules and commands,—the German soldier could scarcely be expected to wage war with clemency or even with common humanity; and the wonder is not that his misdeeds have been so many, but that they have been so few".[1]

This self-centering effect of the thoroughly institutionalized conscience and the consequent loss of all moral perspective, exhibited on such a colossal and tragic scale in the case of Germany, is an all too familiar phenomenon in American life. The institutionalized conscience finds its moral end in satisfying its immediate emotional needs rather than in the solution of social questions. The demagogue or the popular revivalist are well aware of these psychological peculiarities. Hence, their appeals are skilfully directed for the most part to the stimulation of institutionalized bodies of sentiments rather than to the creation of new enthusiasms that may be of service in social progress. The emotional glow aroused by the sermonic appeal to long cherished religious beliefs or by the conventional political harangue is very easily mistaken for genuine moral enthusiasm. But there is no ethical merit in the rekindling of habitual and institutionalized ways of thinking and feeling. They hardly make either the individual or the community better, for, from their very nature,

[1] E. Holmes, *The Nemesis of Docility*, p. 156 f.

they are opposed to progress; they tend to travel in a closed circle, the scope of which is definitely determined by the institutional order.

Enlightenment rather than moral enthusiasm cast in conventional moulds is the need of the social conscience of to-day. The glorification of traditional heroes and leaders of thought and the praise of their deep insight into human nature is too often just a subtle way that the institutionalized conscience has of flattering itself as to the finality of its own deliverances. The brilliant ideals of the leaders of the past are often but the ingrained habits of thought of the present. Much that passes, therefore, for moral inspiration and leadership is just a clever and effective way of reminding ourselves of the entirely obvious. The spiritual or moral leader who calls for a more or less fundamental reorganization of old loyalties in order to meet the exigencies of new and untried situations is more than often regarded as a very uncomfortable person.

It is in the atmosphere of the institutionalized conscience that casuistry tends to flourish. Casuistry in the most comprehensive sense is a form of mental and moral accommodation. In general it is applied to cases of conscience or moral situations where there is uncertainty as to the dictates of duty. It is obvious that where we have a mechanical organization of ethical loyalties in terms of the demands of an institution a gap must inevitably arise between this fixed institutional life and the problems of the evolving social order. Hence an unavoidable and thoroughly legitimate form of casuistry will always arise in time of transition and readjustment in the life of the individual and the community. In this sense the casuistry of Protagoras and the Sophists or of Machiavelli and the sceptics of the Renaissance was the logical outgrowth of the needs of the age. Casuistry is in a sense an indication of a vigorous and expanding moral life. Its absence would indicate stagnation of thought and conduct. The series of decisions by which the Supreme Court interpreted the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment and adapted

it to the problems of a developing national life are excellent illustrations of casuistry in the sphere of law.[1]

But given a situation in which no provision is made for this necessary accommodation of general principles to the new issues as they arise in the course of social evolution, where moral science consists simply in elucidating and applying to new problems ethical principles laid down authoritatively once for all, and we have a phase of casuistry incompatible with a sane and healthful moral life. In such a situation one of two things usually happens. We may have the creation of an interminable series of rules and detailed exceptions intended to adapt these general and unalterable principles to the changing social order. The tendency of this is to make of ethics mere moral quibbling. More often we find that men hold on to the external form and letter while as a matter of fact they read into them ideas utterly foreign to their original meaning. This results in creating an atmosphere of intellectual dishonesty. Both of these tendencies have contributed their part to the traditional atmosphere of suspicion associated with the term casuistry.

The thoroughly institutionalized conscience cannot escape from casuistry of the objectionable type. The institution, with its claim to finality, is forced to find the justification of the means in the end. It must compromise with the facts or lose its hold upon the loyalties of men. For from the institutional point of view a dogma exists to be believed, a law is on the statute books to be enforced, a belief must find support in the existing facts. So long as this view is maintained rather than the pragmatic notion that the value of the institution lies in the furthering of human interests, the facilitating of needed adjustments and the elimination of friction, the moral life will be sacrificed to the institution.

[1] See Mecklin, *Democracy and Race Friction,* Ch. 8.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE HOME

§ 1. The Instinctive Basis of the Home

The social psychologist has called attention to the fundamental position occupied by the family instincts in the development of the higher forms of civilization. "It is probable", says McDougall, "that these two instincts in conjunction, the reproductive and the parental instincts, directly impel human beings to a greater sum of activity, effort, and toil, than all the other motives of human action taken together".[1] These instincts and their emotional accompaniments provide the raw material from which are sprung those benevolent impulses that find expression in the humanizing of war, the erection of hospitals for the relief of disease and suffering, the laws to protect the child in industry, the regulations safeguarding women workers, as well as the measures to protect dumb animals. The sentiments born of the tender emotions centering around the home, the mother and the child have moved men to embark on great struggles for social justice as in the case of the abolition of slavery, both in its older form of chattel slavery and in its modern form of the white slave traffic. It has been contended that one secret of the hold of the Christian faith upon the hearts of men is to be found in the central place it gives to the family. The beautiful cult of the Mother and the Child is not among the least of the elements in the Roman Catholic faith enabling it to keep the loyalties of men of every race for centuries. The appeal of *das Ewig Weibliche* is rooted in the powerful instincts that find expression through the family.

In facing the exceedingly complex and difficult problems

[1] *Social Psychology*, p. 269.

that center around the status of woman and the home in modern society it is well to remember, therefore, that back of external social phenomena, pathological, or otherwise, lie these human instincts that cannot be eliminated or ignored. Our highly rationalized modern order, with its machine process, its impersonal pecuniary economy, its anarchistic individualism that poses as the last word on democracy and freedom, is after all a very recent phase of social evolution. Long before pure reason had ever aspired to direct the course of human life with calm indifference to the demands of instinct and emotion the family had arisen as the chosen instrument for giving expression to instinctive needs. We have stripped the family of its religious sanctions, permitted the machine process to disintegrate its ancient bonds, while attempting weakly to substitute the pale abstractions of a socialized democracy as the safeguard of its integrity.

It may be true, as writers have alleged, that this instinctive basis of the family is growing weaker and that it must be held together in the future by other ties. Even granting this contention, for which it must be confessed there seems to be little tangible evidence, the process of social selection seems of such a character as to correct such a decay of the parental instincts. For in the case of individual variations where this instinct is weak these individuals tend to eliminate themselves owing to the fact that they have fewer children than those in whom the parental instinct is strong. Finally, it is argued that culture itself is inimical to the instincts and often makes for their repression. It seems a fair inference to many that those groups which have cast off the supernatural and traditional sanctions for the home and tend to subject the instincts to the inhibitory influence of pure thought are in danger of eliminating themselves or at least of placing themselves at a decided advantage in competition with the less sophisticated groups in the community in whom the parental instincts function more unrestrainedly. The problem of the family in American society to-day is not merely a question as to whether we can substitute rationally thought-

out sanctions for the more or less irrational urge of the parental and reproductive instincts. It is a question as to whether we can vest in an enlightened public sentiment those sanctions for the family once provided by religion, law, and custom.

§ 2. The Colonial Home

It has been contended that the English colonization of America was more successful than that of the Latin countries because it was based upon the home.[1] Certainly the maturity and stability of the New England colonies was due in no small degree to the fact that they transferred to the wilderness the home traditions of the mother country. The poor success of the early settlers in Virginia arose from the fact that they were to a large extent homeless adventurers who came to the New World to make their fortunes. It was Sir Edwin Sandys, director of the Virginia Colony, who detected the cause of the discontent and failure. "We must find them wives, in order that they may feel at home in Virginia". The ninety girls brought over to fill the gap in homeless and loveless lives provide one of the romantic incidents of early colonial history which has been skilfully exploited by an American novelist.[2]

While the home was central in the life of the American colonist there was considerable variety in the types of home life. New England with its homogeneous population and its Hebraistic conceptions of the family gotten from Calvinism was different from Virginia with its more liberal Anglicanism. In New England the church overshadowed the home and did not hesitate to interfere with its seclusion and intimacy in the interest of religion. In Virginia the home tended to absorb the functions both of church and school. The Virginia home, based upon the plantation and shut off from other homes, was far more of an economic and social

[1] I am greatly indebted in this and the following sections to the material on the American home gathered by Mr. Arthur W. Calhoun, in his monumental work, *A Social History of the American Family.* See also Goodsell, *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution,* Chs. X-XIV.

[2] Mary Johnson, *To Have and to Hold.*

unit. New York and New Jersey were forced to take a generous attitude towards the home, partly because of the liberal Protestantism of the Dutch and the mixed character of the people of New Jersey. Pennsylvania, owing to the presence of Quakers, Germans, and Scotch-Irish, likewise adopted a liberal policy towards the home. The Quakers, like the Puritans, stressed the civil nature of marriage and exhibited a charming hospitality that still lingers in the homes of their descendants. In the German home emphasis was laid upon thrift and industry. "Upon the birth of a son, they exult in the gift of a ploughman or a waggoner; and upon the birth of a daughter they rejoice in the addition of another spinster or milkmaid to the family". In the pioneer home of the Scotch-Irish of the western frontier the stern tenets of Calvinism lost something of the somberness that darkened the New England home because of the freer life and the sturdy common sense of the Scot.

The factors that shaped the colonial home were in the main economic, religious, and legal, and of these the economic were doubtless the most important. The home was the social, educational, religious, but especially the economic unit of colonial society. Families were large and the pressure of the struggle for existence as well as religious sanctions urged to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth". The fearful toll taken from colonial womanhood in childbearing can be read to-day in the simple records of New England tombstones. To the children, only a small percentage of whom actually attained adulthood, were added unmarried relatives, children by previous marriages, children of the poor bound out, and the servants. The colonial home, not only on the plantations of Virginia, but likewise in New England, was often quite an establishment. During the age of domestic industry it was here that the needs of the community were met and here that labor found employment.

Strong pressure in the interest of production, increase of population and general social efficiency was brought to encourage marriage. Bachelors were little short of social

pariahs. A woman had no status outside of a family and spinsterdom was a reproach. "An *old* (or superannuated) maid in Boston is thought such a curse, as nothing can exceed it (and looked on as a dismal spectacle)". Those who did not marry were required in New Haven to live in "licensed" families where they were under surveillance and were forced to "walk diligently in a constant lawful employment, attending both family duties and the public worship of God, and keeping good order day and night or otherwise". Economic pressure brought about speedy remarriages. Women married to get heads of their households and managers for their properties and the men for housekeepers. Judge Sewall's adventures as an aged wooer are exceedingly illuminating as throwing light upon the economic phase of marriage. The bargainings and bickerings between him and the various fair widows whom he approached may also serve to dissipate some of the romance associated with Puritan wooings by the story of Priscilla and John Alden. Life was a stern struggle in which romance played a subordinate part.

The home was the industrial training school for the rising generation. In the daily round of tasks done in the home, boy and girl were equipped for their future duties as heads of homes of their own. And the richness and variety of this training may be imagined from the fact that within the circle of the home were performed all those processes connected with the production of food, clothing, and the like that are now relegated to mill and factory. This economic training was supplemented by religious and intellectual education, which in the case of boys of the better classes was followed by courses in the grammar school and the college. The intellectual training of the colonial girl was scant. The prevailing conception of woman's education was expressed in the lines,

> "Give me next good, an understanding wife,
> By nature wise, not learned much by art.
> . . . . . .
> A passive understanding to conceive,
> And judgment to discern I wish to find.

Beyond that all as hazardous I leave;
Learning and pregnant wit in woman-kind,
What it finds malleable maketh frail,
And doth not add more ballast but more sail."

Religious forces also shaped the colonial home. This was especially true of New England with its Puritan atmosphere. Calvinism emphasized thrift, the faithful prosecution of a "calling", an ascetic attitude towards luxury or indulgence that favored accumulation. Calvinism also placed a strong taboo upon sex. The emphasis upon frugality made for the stern repression of wasteful sexual indulgences. Male chastity, not being economically and socially as wasteful as female, was never so strenuously enforced. The life of the child in the Puritan home was singularly distorted, from our modern point of view, owing to the reign of a faith that taught the innate wickedness of the child nature. Pressure was early brought upon the child to secure its conversion and rescue from the eternal torments to which it was doomed by Adam's primal sin. Leslie Stephen remarks that the complacency with which Jonathan Edwards narrates the mental anguish he caused his little daughter by dilating upon her depraved and lost estate makes one feel like using a horsewhip. Calvinistic likewise is the Hebraistic idea of the family that subjected wife, children, and servants to the iron rule of the *pater-familias*. "His children and servants he mightily encouraged in the study of the Scriptures, and countenanced their addresses to him with any of their inquiries; but when he saw any of them negligent about the concerns either of their general or particular callings, he would admonish them with such penetrating efficacy, that they could scarce forbear falling down at his feet with tears. A word from him was enough to steer them". Even sweet Margaret Winthrop, though dearly loved by her husband, addressed him as "lord". Contrast this patriarchal rôle of the head of the family with his position to-day and one gains some idea of the fundamental transformations through which the American home has passed.

In one respect Puritanism seemed to have exercised a liberalizing influence upon the home and marriage, namely, in regard to divorce. It inherited the Protestant tradition of Luther and Calvin that made marriage a civil matter. The liberal attitude of Milton towards divorce is well known and this notion lingered with the Puritans. But economic pressure, the paramount position of importance of the family in colonial life and the natural conservatism both of Puritan and Scotch-Irish prevented this liberal note from ever becoming pronounced. New England differed, however, from the more conservative South in that divorces were granted in New England while in the South "Not a case has been discovered of absolute divorce by pre-revolutionary legislatures". This was due in the main to the hold of the Anglican church upon the marriage relation.

The legal status of woman during the colonial period was determined by the traditions of the common law of England. These presupposed the inferiority of woman and her complete subjection to the husband. Blackstone, writing towards the close of the eighteenth century, says, "By marriage the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of her husband. . . . Upon this principle of a union of person in husband and wife depends almost all the legal rights, duties, and disabilities that either of them acquire by the marriage. . . . For this reason a man cannot grant anything to his wife, or enter into covenant with her; for the grant would be to suppose her separate existence, and to covenant with her would be only to covenant with himself; and therefore it is also generally true that all compacts made between husband and wife when single are voided by the intermarriage".[1]

In general, it may be said that the colonial home was the product of the mores brought from the Old Country, and

[1] Quoted by Goodsell, *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 346.

especially England, modified to a considerable extent by the outcome of the struggle with the wilderness. Being moulded for the most part by the traditions of the middle class group, the family was strongly tinged with property interests. In a loose and precarious pioneer existence the family was of priceless value as an instrument of social control and material progress. Functioning in a society with more or less of caste distinction, the family naturally fell under the control of the upper class who utilized it to accomplish their own ends in politics, business, education, and religion.

§3. The Home of the Transitional Period

There is little in common between the social norms that shape the position of the home in modern life and those underlying the colonial home. During the transitional period, reaching, roughly speaking, from the war of independence to the civil war, there was almost an entire break with the old order of things. The home changed with the fundamental changes incident to the development of a national life so that by the close of the civil war the home had assumed most of those traits that characterize it to-day.

Three factors stand out conspicuously in their influence upon the home during the transition period, namely, chattel slavery or the "peculiar institution" of the South, the spread of the industrial revolution with its concomitant urban industrialism, and finally the individualistic democracy that was nourished by the atmosphere of the frontier. Of these three factors the last two were most important for the home. Their influences are with us still, only in more aggravated form. With the debâcle of the slave power the home of both black and white in the South has been rapidly adjusting itself to the new order. The aftermath of slavery is still in evidence in the negro home of the "black belt",[1] while with the white it has become little more than a memory.

The effects of the pioneer democracy of the earlier decades of the last century upon the old colonial home were

[1] See Mecklin, *Democracy and Race Friction*, p. 205 f.

radical in character. We are to-day just beginning to realize their full significance. The freedom of the frontier combined with the philosophy of *laissez faire* to effect a complete transformation. The opening up of a virgin continent removed the economic pressure that had given the colonial family its position of power. With the disappearance of pecuniary considerations went questions of social rank which, furthermore, were antagonistic to the rising egalitarianism that was coming to be synonymous with democracy. The growing individualism tended more and more to place the child upon the same footing with the parent, thus weakening parental control. With the triumph of the intense individualism of the frontier went a spirit of anarchy that undermined the ancient sanctions so that the family was left without social control. The tendency was to make marriage a matter of personal whim and inclination. Society was not yet ready for the development of spiritual and moral sanctions that would secure the integrity of the family in the absence of the time-honored economic, religious, and social sanctions now discredited. Thus we see the forces already at work that have given us the modern problem of the family.

The complete subordination of wife to husband under the old Puritan régime was well voiced in Milton's lines,

> "To whom thus Eve with perfect beauty adorn'd:
> 'My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst
> Unargued I obey; so God ordains;
> God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more
> Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise'."

But under the influence of the new pioneer democracy we detect the beginnings of a new order. To be sure, the change was slow. For the best part of the first half of the last century woman's legal position in America was little short of mediaeval. Prior to 1840 in Massachusetts a woman had no legal right to serve as treasurer of her own sewing society without some man being sponsor for her. But in the far West on the isolated farm it was impossible to pre-

serve the old traditions that hedged about the woman of colonial days. Her economic importance as the home-builder guaranteed her freedom and elevated her social standing. The American woman in fact has earned her emancipation through the noble part she played in the winning of the great West. These forces making for the equality of woman permeated the nation and found their way back to the more settled East by a sort of social osmosis.

The French traveler, DeTocqueville, writing about the close of the third decade of the century, was able to detect this new note of equality between the sexes. "If they hold that man and his partner ought not always to exercise their intellect and understanding in the same manner, they at least believe the understanding of the one to be as sound as that of the other and her intellect to be as clear". Oberlin College recognized this fact when it opened as co-educational and gave the first degrees granted to women in America in 1841. All these forces making for the emancipation of woman came to a head in a Woman's Rights Convention that met in 1848 and drew up a Declaration of Feminine Independence. It is a long and weary road that woman has had to travel to freedom but the beginnings of that better day, the full tide of which seems about to come with a federal amendment giving her the franchise, must be sought in the pioneer democracy of the West.

The transformation of the home through the new democracy is exhibited even more strikingly in the changed status of the child. America has been called *das Land der Zukunft* and the future belongs to youth. It was not surprising, therefore, that the pioneer should work for the child, thereby lending to the child and to child-life a new dignity and interest. Virgin natural resources, furthermore, offering unlimited possibilities for economic independence were but a lure to entice the boy from the home and to set him free from the parental control. The pressure of economic forces thus joined hands with the anarchistic individualism of a pioneer democracy to undermine the old patriarchal conception of the home.

Radical democracy stressed the fact that the social unit is not the family but the individual. Egalitarianism and the sovereign rights of citizenship tended to place father and son upon the same plane. Membership in the larger political unit overshadowed the home-tie and tended to discredit it. The new sense of spiritual solidarity in a more comprehensive democratic order where all are equal and yet sovereigns at first disrupted the home but was destined to return towards the close of the century to democratize the home and help it to adjust itself to the new order.

The new spirit of tolerance and of freedom thus injected into the home and the life of the child had its good as well as its bad effects. It introduced the cult of the child in the home as well as the nation. A journal of 1833 remarks, "The attention now bestowed on children forms an interesting feature of the day. An interest seems to be rekindling, analogous to that which animated the ancient philosophers". Travelers speak of the glad, free children that grace the American home and "sparkle in the streets of American towns like field flowers in the springtime".[1] Such freedom and spontaneity, however, easily gave rise to youthful precocity and pertness. Lack of family discipline was a crying need of the day, if we may trust the laments of religious journals. The breakdown of old home traditions came so rapidly that there was a superfluity of freedom. The children of the earlier decades of the last century paralleled in many ways the children of the immigrant families of to-day who have broken with the traditions of the old country and have not yet adjusted themselves to the demands of the new. This breakdown of the family mores was even more disastrous for the girls than for the boys. The young girls of the early part of the century gave evidence of much foolish sentimentality and unbridled emotionalism. They were given freedom and lacked the proper training for the exercise of this freedom in the gratification of emotional needs.

The effect upon the home of the rise of a pioneer democ-

[1] Calhoun, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 54 f.

racy was far more beneficial than hurtful. In the influence of the industrial revolution upon the home, however, the evil is more equally mingled with the good. The problem of the child and woman in industry appeared from the very beginning. This was due to the fact that the larger part of the men were absorbed by agriculture. The old Puritan tradition of work sanctioned child-labor. Finally, statesmen such as Hamilton looked upon the mill as an industrial boon that would furnish employment for those who otherwise would be idle or a burden to the community. The result was that the early American factories were manned almost entirely by women and children. We have the beginnings in the New England mills of the family-system of labor to be observed still in the cotton mills of the South where entire families are brought in from the mountains and work in the mills. The family exists, to be sure, but the home is largely sacrificed to the demands of the new economic order.

The inevitable accompaniment of the spread of the machine process was the increasing urbanization of the population. At the beginning of the century only four per cent of the people lived in cities; by the time of the civil war it had mounted to sixteen per cent. Before 1830 the tenement had become a problem. Even more subtle, however, were the moral and spiritual effects of the industrial revolution upon the home. The rapid economic expansion made possible by the machine and the rise of the money-economy introduced a materialistic and utilitarian note that made itself felt also in the home. Home affections were sacrificed to the demands of economic self-assertion and material success. The warmth and intimacy we found in the colonial family, even in spite of its patriarchal character, gave place to an unsentimental matter-of-fact attitude. The family was no longer necessary to economic success; it became an incident lying somewhat apart from immediate interests and purposes. The stress placed by the rising capitalistic order upon competition, the inviolability of private property, and contract did not make for the cultivation of family sentiment. Competition, in fact,

militated against the fixed traditions upon which the family had relied in the past. Democratic individualism only accentuated the forces of competitive industrialism tending to strip the family of sentiment. Throughout all these changes, however, the American home maintained its essential integrity. We have indeed in the transitional period rather the beginnings of problems, the full significance of which for the family could not be fully measured until the period of the present.

§4. The Problem of the Home

During the colonial and the transitional periods just sketched there was no problem of the home. That is, the question was never seriously raised as to the place and function of the home in the society of the future. The permanence and stability of the home were inseparably associated in the minds of men with that of society itself. During the early eighties, however, when "the Great Society" had at last succeeded in taking on articulate form, sociologists, ministers, and social reformers began seriously to interest themselves as to the integrity of the home. It was in 1885 that the National Divorce League was formed.

But the reformers did not create the problem of the home. As a matter of fact, almost all those factors cited to-day in evidence of the instability of the home were present during the early part of the nineteenth century. The hotel and boarding-house life, to which some foreign critics have given the name *der Amerikanismus*,[1] was a phenomenon already noted before the civil war. The demands of business involving absence from home, as in the case of the travelling man, and the effect of industry in breaking up the home into individuals, for whom the home was only a place to eat and sleep, were already felt before 1860. The rise of luxury and the parasitic wife, the servant problem, the growing repugnance of women for domestic drudgery, the facilities offered by an urbanized civilization for sexual gratification, the rivalry of the club with the home, and finally the disintegrat-

[1] A. Forel, *Die Sexuelle Frage*.

ing effect of excessive individualism—none of these elements are new in the problem of the modern home. They existed in the germ at least during the first half of the last century. We are concerned, therefore, with forces that have been at work in some cases for generations and that are deeply ingrained in the structure of society. To grapple with the problem of the home is merely to raise the ultimate social problem of which it is but a phase.

Divorce is perhaps the best index to the instability of the home. Our data, however, include only those cases that reach the divorce courts. Among the poor desertions are possibly more frequent than divorce. It is asserted that we must increase the percentage at least twenty to get the actual facts as to the instability of the family.[1] The bare statistics, without this larger margin of neglected data, are startling enough.[2] They indicate that in 1885 the United States had 23,472 divorces, while all other Christian countries had only 20,131. In 1905 the figures were 68,000 to 40,000, the United States leading the rest of Christendom by 28,000 divorces. During the decade from 1890 to 1900 divorces increased in this country 66.6 per cent, or more than three times the increase in population. By 1906 the proportion of divorces to marriages was approximately 1 to 13.9.[3] If the present rate of increase of divorce continues it has been estimated that by the end of the century more than half of all marriages will end in divorce.

The causes that have led to this situation are exceedingly complicated. The unstable home merely epitomizes the larger problem of our uncertain morality for all the forces concerned register themselves in the home. No one element, therefore, can explain the situation. At the lower levels the factors most in evidence in the disruption of the home are economic in character. Among these the most important perhaps is

[1] Ellwood, *Sociology and Modern Social Problems*, p. 137.

[2] Wilcox, *The Divorce Problem: A Study in Statistics*, Columbia College Studies, Vol I, 1891. Carroll D. Wright, United States Census, Special Report on Marriage and Divorce, 1909, Part I, pp. 8-22.

[3] Goodsell, *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 458.

unemployment. The new industrial order likewise affects the middle class home in that it offers to women careers of economic independence and usefulness. The situation here, however, is still further complicated by the growing sense of personal rights and dignity that rebels against the economic dependence and domestic drudgery of the home. With the sudden amassing of great fortunes within the last few decades we have the appearance of the parasitic wife and the multiplication of temptations to follow the leadings of a selfish and irresponsible individualism made familiar to us in the domestic scandals of the wealthy classes. For both middle and wealthy classes the problem is still further complicated by gross ignorance of the real spiritual meaning of the marriage relation.

With the passing of the religious sanctions once surrounding the marriage tie, with the decay of a negative ethic and the disappearance of the sheer institutional inertia that has always played such a large rôle in preserving the family of the past there is no attempt on the part of parents or of society to teach the rising generation the moral and social significance of the family. This is strikingly illustrated in the general ignorance of the social evil and its insidious menace to the integrity of the family. "The number of applications for divorce from this cause", writes Dr. Prince A. Morrow, "especially in the middle and upper classes of society, is much larger than is commonly supposed. In divorce proceedings the cause of action usually appears under some non-compromising name, such as 'cruelty', 'non-support', 'desertion', while the true cause is never made public".[1]

The fact that grave causes such as desertion, cruelty, adultery, drunkenness, and the like constitute 97 per cent of all the grounds for divorce is eloquent testimony to the serious nature of the forces causing this maladjustment in the family relation. It is possible, in spite of the complexity of the factors involved in divorce, to classify practically all

[1] *Social Disease and the Family*, The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 14, p. 629.

of them under one or other of the two categories, the economic or the moral. The two categories may not be sharply separated, to be sure, for they are in reality but different phases of the same general process of social transformation through which we are passing.

The effect of the industrial reorganization of society upon the home has been sketched in an earlier section. It appears in the tendency of the educated middle class to restrict the birth rate in the interest of a higher standard of living. It registers itself in the inclination of the young man of the middle and upper classes to postpone marriage until the selfish individualism of business has stripped his life of romance and has incapacitated him for the loving and loyal self-sacrifice of wedlock. It is seen in the effect of the "touch-and-go" existence of a wage-earner, the integrity of whose home life is constantly jeopardized by the fluctuations of "seasonal industries," strikes, or the exigencies of the closed shop. The business demands that offer the women of the middle class the freedom of economic independence, a career and escape from the drudgery of domesticity attract young women out of the home into the store and factory and unfit them for motherhood and home-building. Most serious of all for the wage-earning group is the lack of steady employment, now a permanent factor in the situation, thanks to a social order in which production is conducted sporadically and with reference to the profits of the investor rather than with regard to the consuming public. Owing to the spread of the machine process the problem of unemployment has invaded every inland hamlet where the hum of the factory has drowned the ring of the anvil of the village blacksmith. A sympathetic investigation has revealed the part played by unemployment in the creation of that industrial flotsam and jetsam, the I.W.W. of the far West.[1] Obviously such conditions can only result in the destruction of habits of industry and sobriety, in social inefficiency and unreliability, in the complete demoralization

[1] Carleton H. Parker, "The I. W. W.: A Different View," *The Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1917.

of the home and ultimately in desertion, pauperism, vagrancy, and crime.

Scarcely less important than industrial changes in its effect upon the home is the growing spirit of democracy. Our democratic ideals which existed for a century as little more than counsels of political perfection have finally entered upon a period of socialization. Since the overthrow of slavery the middle of the last century this process of socialization has progressed by leaps and bounds. The great contest of democracy with plutocratic individualism was followed by the titanic struggle to make the world safe for democracy. All of this has served to intensify democratic loyalties. The status of woman was the last to be effected in this spread of democracy, owing mainly to the conservative traditions of the home. It would be rank injustice not to recognize the inestimable value in our national life of those domestic virtues that are the glory of the American home. It would, however, be closing our eyes to patent facts to deny that these virtues have flourished in a closed circle, the very intimacy and solidarity of which has militated against the development of civic ideals. The spirit of loyalty and self-sacrifice, the feelings of pride and of moral responsibility so generously manifested in the home-circle have not been carried over into civic life. Curiously enough, those public utilities upon which Americans place the most emphasis are those that touch most closely this selfish and self-centered life of the home, namely, the police, the fire department, and the health officer.

It has proved unfortunate, therefore, both for the home and the rising spirit of democracy that they have to a certain extent been opposed to each other. The home has suffered the more because it has long sought its sanctions not in an enlightened and democratized social conscience but in time-honored traditions and the more or less external and authoritarian prescriptions of law and religious dogma. The home, therefore, has found it somewhat difficult to assume the rôle required of it in a progressive and self-conscious democracy. For this new rôle demands that the home shall no longer

depend for its integrity and persistence upon arbitrary external forces but upon free and loyal and intelligent and living comradeship. This democratic spirit has been reinforced by the transformation wrought since the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, which sounded the death-knell of authoritarianism in theology and ethics. Evolution has gradually invalidated our static, external, institutionalized scheme of values. Men are slowly coming to feel that even in as holy a relation as that of matrimony the interests of expanding personalities in a progressive commonwealth of human wills is the ultimate measure of values.

In the light of these facts it will be seen that divorce in America, which to outsiders has much the appearance of a national scandal, may be but the superficial and passing manifestation of a profound spiritual and moral transformation. "Of a truth", remarks Professor Howard, "to the serious student of social evolution the accelerated divorce movement appears clearly as an incident in the mighty process of spiritual liberation which is radically changing the relative positions of man and woman in society. Through the swift process of individualization for the sake of socialization the corporate unity of the patriarchal family has been broken up and even completely destroyed. More and more wife and child have been released from the sway of the house-father and placed directly under the larger social control. The new solidarity of the state is being won at the expense of the old solidarity of the family. The family bond is no longer coercion but persuasion. The tie which holds the members of the family together is ceasing to be juridical and becoming spiritual. . . . Essentially the family is becoming a psychic fact. Beyond question the individualization for the sake of socialization is producing a loftier ideal of the marital union and a juster view of the relative functions of the sexes in the world's work.[1]

The transfer of the seat of authority from an external

[1] Howard, "Is Freer Divorce an Evil?" *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 14, pp. 771 ff.

source to the developing social conscience itself has brought with it serious responsibility. It means in the first place that the integrity and persistence of the marriage tie must now no longer depend upon independent and external forces such as custom, church or state. In so far as the marriage relation possesses moral and spiritual values, that is, in so far as it is anything more than a mere form or social institution, its vitality must depend upon the sympathetic and intelligent coöperation of human wills. The home, therefore, cannot longer persist through the sheer inertia of time-honored traditions. Where the real spirit of the home is lacking it is already in process of disintegration. Here in this changed social emphasis and the inability of Americans to measure up to this higher spiritual standard we must seek one explanation at least for the prevalence of divorce in American life. Reared, as the average American has been, in the haphazard, unreflective, and conventional ethic of a social order that has no firm grasp upon comprehensive moral values, and schooled as he has been in the past to rely upon the toughness of his political and social institutions to resist whatever strains perverse human nature may subject them to, he is unable to meet the demands of the situation. He has reached his moral majority but still insists upon retaining the habits and manners of behavior of adolescence.

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CHAPTER XV

THE ECCLESIASTICAL ETHIC

The present moral bewilderment, discussed in an earlier chapter, is due to uncertainty in the sphere of those ultimate loyalties dealt with in ethics and religion. The lower levels of morals that have to do with the ordinary business, political, and social relations of life have remained intact. It is not a question of the validity of contracts, of the payment of honest debts, or of obligations devolving upon us in the office or the family circle. The homely commonplace virtues have remained for the most part unchallenged. But they give us light and guidance only for our immediate tasks. They extend no further than the immediate environment. The deepening and widening individual, national, and international experience has poured its tide in upon us with such overwhelming force that we are overborne and swept from our ancient moorings by a welter of unsolved problems. Our time-honored shibboleths seem inadequate instruments wherewith to rationalize the elements in the new and untried present.

The charge has frequently been made in these troublous days that institutionalized religion has not measured up to its responsibilities in providing the modern man with the spiritual and moral orientation he so desperately needs. The American people have always been and still remain a deeply religious people. Moral idealism, for the average man, is intimately associated with religious loyalties. Any uncertainty, therefore, in the deliverances of the church upon moral issues means an inevitable laming of the social conscience. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the structure of the moral traditions that have arisen within the institutional setting of Christianity of the Protestant type. This will

enable us to understand the limitations, if there are such, that beset the ecclesiastical conscience. It will place us in the position also to suggest what must be done to remove the hindrances to the application of the spiritual dynamic of the church to the problems of to-day.

§ 1. The Church and Society

The immediate moral task of the early Christian was to keep himself "unspotted from the world". The ethical problem of the modern Christian is to find richer contacts with the world, to socialize the ecclesiastical conscience. For the best part of fifteen centuries the church was the keeper of the conscience of western civilization; she strove for centuries to implant Christian ideals in the breasts of the Teutonic invaders from the North, though, as it would appear, with indifferent success. To-day institutional Christianity is concerned not so much with the problem of elevating men to the Christian standard as with the task of recasting its own ethical ideals.

For the best part of a century, from the days of Eichhorn to Wellshausen and from Reimarus to Wrede, works of solid learning together with flying squadrons of more ephemeral contributions have been directed against historical Christianity. The battle began with the historicity of the Old Testament, shifted to that of the New Testament, and then centered around the problem of the supernatural and the divinity of Jesus. Criticism to-day has extended to the moral sphere. Men are asking what is the ethical significance of institutionalized Christianity for modern life. It is with the last phase of the problem that we are immediately concerned. What value for modern society have the ethical traditions that have been developed within the bounds of institutionalized Christianity?

We shall let those speak first who are of the "household of faith" and have the interests of the church deeply at heart. In criticism surely if anywhere the dictum holds, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend". "The Christian

Church", writes Canon Henson, "must henceforth reckon with a greater moral authority than its own, an authority, indeed, which is largely its own creation, the authority of the general conscience. . . . To some minds, I know, it will be disconcerting and repugnant to have to accept as a postulate of reasoning the supremacy of the general conscience, to have to admit the inferiority of the ecclesiastical executive when the moral guidance of men is at stake; but this admission seems to me the very lesson of the history of Christian civilization".[1]

According to Dr. Figgis, institutionalized religion is no longer the keeper of the conscience of the average man. He asks, "What are men's ideals to-day? It would be hard to tell. But so far as their main energies are concerned, and we can form any judgment as to what animates the man in the street, I cannot doubt that it is truer to say that Christianity runs counter to our civilization than that it fulfills it".[2] An English clergyman asserts, "It cannot be doubted that the churches have lost their hold upon two classes of every community—the cultured classes and the industrial classes. . . . The leadership of science and art and literature is already almost entirely in the hands of men who have broken with organized Christianity".[3] This is corroborated by an Oxford dean who writes, "Being from the nature of my profession in contact on all hands with young men of many types belonging to the educated classes, I say, with some confidence, that never, I believe, was the hold of religion upon the minds of the youth of this country stronger, nor the hold of Christianity weaker . . . the difficulty which young men have to-day in accepting Christianity is not intellectual but moral".[4]

The failure of the churchly ethic to connect with the life of the worker has been frequently remarked upon. "There is a tremendous gulf between the churches and the masses

[1] H. H. Henson, *Moral Discipline in the Christian Church*, p. 169 f.
[2] *Civilization at the Cross Roads*, p. 23.
[3] K. C. Anderson: "Why Not Face the Facts?" *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 4, p. 846.
[4] Garrod, *The Religion of All Good Men*, p. 8.

of the people in the densest populations of Christendom", writes Graham Taylor. "The deepest breach is that in the ethical relationship of industrial life".[1] This language should have special weight as coming from one who has spent the best part of a lifetime in the attempt to close this gap.

The church is still spoken of as the moral leaven, the wheat among the tares, the city set on a hill to light the way of a lost world. This draws an unfortunate and untenable distinction between the church and society. For the unprejudiced investigator will insist that wickedness and moral corruption do not recognize any such boundary as that of church and world. Evil characters unfortunately are found within the church as well as without it. Furthermore, any investigation of a given community will reveal that men of the highest integrity and of recognized ability and moral power are to be found in large numbers without any church affiliations. No fair-minded individual would slander his fellows or stultify his own moral sense by calling these persons moral bankrupts.

This ancient ethical dualism of world and church is based upon a misunderstanding of the nature and construction of society itself. There is a very profound sense in which we are all "members one of another" in our highly mutualized modern life. Our typical sinners are our own creation, the outgrowth of the social process of which we are parts. We cannot condemn them without condemning ourselves. To speak of the entire race as ruined while a few are snatched as brands from the burning is to speak a language which to the social psychologist is unintelligible. Were all the race essentially depraved, then the race would never be any wiser. The fact that we can understand such a statement at all shows that it is false. There is nothing in the social consciousness either of church member or of outsider that supports such a philosophy of human nature. The ethical solidarity of the entire community is clearly evinced in the

[1] "The Social Function of the Church," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 5, p. 320.

fact that even the preacher must depend upon the moral sense of society for support. "Let those who cling to the oligarchic notion of a solvent church and a ruined world study the social activities of any great town; let them take counsel with the leaders of any important social movement—say the Labor Party—and they will discover that their formula is unworkable. They will see that the church as a power external to the world is ceasing to exist, while a new church within the world, bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh, is slowly taking form. Between the two a new relationship is arising. So close is the union that, whether for bane or blessing, they share a common lot. All ethical contrast is abolished; both in guilt and in innocence they are one. If the world is bankrupt, the church cannot be solvent but shares with the world in the general ruin, both as to the guilt of its cause and the unending mischief of its effects".[1]

§ 2. The Rise of a Secular Ethic

A secular ethic, or a body of ethical norms independent of the institutional setting of the church, is to-day a recognized fact. This secular ethic has gradually emancipated itself from the dominance of the churchly ethic in the sphere of the intellect, of politics, and of business. It is not easy to indicate in detail how measures of moral values have arisen in each of these spheres that are independent of the churchly ethic for they have drawn much of their inspiration from the church. Our ethical ideals are in a very real and comprehensive sense the product of a civilization or of an intermixture of civilizations. Our ethical traditions show distinct traces of Hebrew, Greco-Roman, Teutonic, as well as Christian elements. Many of the legal and political canons of our modern life are Greco-Roman so far as their logical formulation is concerned; they owe much moral inspiration to the religious and ethical fervor of the Reformation; in practical spirit and content they are still essentially Anglo-Saxon. The business ethic of to-day is tinged with Teutonic brutality,

[1] Jacks: "Church and World," *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 5, p. 9.

though the impetus to its formulation and for a time its sanctions came from the religious and political liberalism of the seventeenth century.

The texture of our modern life as a whole is to a very large extent still Teutonic rather than Christian. The ideals of Jesus have leavened but they have not mastered society. The ethics of the business corporation have been derived neither from the Hebrew Decalog nor from the Sermon on the Mount. Much can be said for the contention that the spirit of our modern secular ethic is dominated by the notions of chivalry and of honor rather than by meekness and brotherly kindness. This is far from saying, however, that the secular ethic has not been influenced by Christianity. The ideals of chivalry and honor were blended with purely Christian elements in the days of feudalism. The Christian ethic contributed to the knightly ideal the virtues of humility and courtesy to which institutionalized Christianity added the rather doubtful virtues of implicit faith and holy zeal in destroying the enemies of the church, such as the heretic and the infidel. The knight who became a heretic was at once degraded and a scullion hacked off his spurs with a cleaver.

The strictly knightly virtues of valor, honor, and liberality still lie at the core of secular ethics. Courage is conspicuously manifest in the service of country, on the battlefield, in civic reform, in industrial enterprise, or in the pursuit of truth. Honor appears in the gentleman's jealous regard for his good name, in the business man's fidelity in observing his contracts, and in the scientist's scrupulous intellectual honesty with himself and with his fellow-searchers for the truth. Liberality is illustrated in the large-heartedness of modern philanthropy and in the spirit of *noblesse oblige* which is one of the finest flowers of the secular ethic in modern life. To be sure, these powerful egoistic virtues need to be enriched, softened, and spiritualized by the gentler Christian ethic. The fact that the great German people have cultivated in their national life the distinctly Teutonic virtues without the saving leaven

of the Christian ethic is no insignificant factor in the late world tragedy. It will hardly be denied, however, that these virtues so opposed to the spirit of early Christianity are still among the most powerful driving forces of our modern life. They, rather than the softer Christian virtues of forbearance, brotherly love, meekness, and humility, dominate the political and economic order. They have been conspicuously in evidence in the recent international tragedy. What stirred the moral indignation of English-speaking peoples above all else and finally plunged them one and all into the recent world war was not primarily the infractions of abstract international rights, nor the brutal violation of the Christian sentiments of human brotherhood and sympathy, but the ruthless disregard of international honor and the cruel and unchivalrous treatment of innocent women and children and helpless non-combatants.

The rise of the secular ethic is due, therefore, to the culmination of many forces. It comes in part from the stubborn persistence of the militaristic instincts in the hearts of men; in part it arises from the increasing prevalence of scientific method in modern life; in part it has been hastened by the alienation of politics and industry from the influence of religion. Certainly all these, and other elements besides, are present in the general recrudescence of the humanistic note first clearly enunciated in the Protagorean formula, "man the measure of all things", and later asserting itself in the aesthetic individualism of the Renaissance. The rise to power of the modern humanism has been much slower, much more thorough-going and comprehensive than in either of the other two periods. It is not handicapped by the disintegrating intellectualism or by the political and moral inexperience of the ancient Greeks. It possesses a deep moral earnestness, a tested scientific method and the self-confidence born of mature political and economic traditions which the Renaissance did not have. The bid it makes for the control of the moral ideals of men, therefore, is much stronger than ever before. Through centuries of close contact with the secular

ethic it has absorbed much of the ethical idealism of Christianity, its high estimate of human life, its spirit of sympathy and brotherly kindness. In taking over these universal moral values, however, the twentieth century social conscience has stripped them of their outworn theological dress, vitalized them and adapted them to existing social conditions. The church is in danger of becoming like some fair temple from which impious hands have removed the sacred images and stolen the altar fires that inspired the worshipping throngs of former days.

§ 3. Protestantism and Competition

It will hardly be contended that the ethics of business enterprise is in entire accord with the spirit of the founder of Christianity. For in business "The social and civil relations binding the individual are prevailingly and increasingly formed for pecuniary ends, and enforced by pecuniary sanctions. The individualism of the modern era sets out with industrial aims and makes its way by force of industrial efficiency. And since the individual relations under this system take the pecuniary form, the individualism thus worked out and embodied in the modern institutional fabric is a pecuniary individualism and is therefore typically egoistic". Has this unlovely and selfish pecuniary individualism of the existing business system anything in common with the traditional churchly ethic? A glance at the evolution of the ecclesiastical ethic of the Protestant type will enable us to answer this question.

The rise of economic liberalism of the individualistic type in Puritan England and America was the logical development of certain implications of Protestantism. Calvinism, as has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, viewed the world as a moral system complete, comprehensive and rational to the core. The spirit and intent of Calvinism demanded for its attainment conditions and instrumentalities in business and in politics which would make possible the fulfilment of one's "calling". The accepted theological doctrines must

have practical means of realization. The fundamental difference between the Protestantism of Luther and that of Calvin lay in just the thoroughness with which the Calvinist carried out the implications of the idea of freedom. It was for this reason that the beginnings of economic individualism in Puritan England of the seventeenth century were intimately associated with the individualism of the Protestant ethic of the Calvinistic type. Religious individualism inspired economic individualism.

The most vigorous offspring of the economic individualism of the seventeenth century is undoubtedly the principle of competition; it has been called the life of the modern industrial order. As set forth in the lucid pages of the *Wealth of Nations,* it fascinated the intellect of William Pitt and became part of the creed of English industrial life. There is no principle of our modern business life, however, that is so thoroughly incompatible with the Christian doctrines of love and altruistic service as the principle of unrestricted competition. Protestant ethics from the time of Baxter to the present, therefore, has striven in vain to bring the two principles together. Perhaps the nearest approach to the golden rule admitted by business ethics is the negative principle of fair play. Defoe, the valiant literary protagonist of the Puritan ethic of trade, seems to have recognized the essential incompatibility of the tradesman's life with the altruism of the Christian ethics. "If no man must go beyond or defraud his neighbor, if our conversation must be without covetousness and the like, why, then, it is impossible for tradesmen to be Christians, and we must unhinge all our business, act upon new principles in trade, and go on by new rules; in short, we must shut off our shop and leave trade".[1] Even in the pages of Baxter's *Christian Directory* one stumbles upon practical directions designed to safeguard business against the demands of piety.

The dissenting sects, who often were in closer touch with the spirit of primitive Christianity than the older institu-

[1] *The Compleat English Tradesman, London,* 1726, p. 285.

tionalized forms of Protestantism, seemed to have felt that the economic individualism of the prevailing Puritan ethic was incompatible with the true spirit of the founder of Christianity. It is to be detected in the following language of Wesley. "Religion must necessarily(!) produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How, then, is it possible that Methodism, that is, a religion of the heart, though it flourishes now like a green baytree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal, consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, in the lust of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life". Here we have evidence that the Puritan ethic of economic self-assertion was becoming an integral part of all Protestant Christianity. It was found even among the Quakers.

We have here, then, an interesting illustration of the extent to which earlier religious ideals may be modified by later political and economic conditions. This embodiment within the ecclesiastical ethic of the principles of unrestricted competition and profitism is hardly in harmony with the spirit of the ethics of Jesus. The union, to be sure, has never been complete and harmonious. For the selfish economic individualism of Protestant business ethic is constantly warring with the altruistic idealism of the Sermon on the Mount. This appears primarily in the familiar double-standard of ethics which characterizes Protestantism just as it did the church of the middle ages. There is, however, this fundamental difference that the ethics of the middle ages was based upon fixed social gradations so that the moral standards of the butcher, baker, or candlestickmaker were not the same as the "counsels of perfection" demanded of the monk who had elected to live the *vita contemplativa* of the spiritual recluse. In the spiritual democracy of the saints in Protestantism, however, no such double-standard is legitimate. Wherever it exists we have evidence of the breakdown of the ecclesiastical ethic.

§ 4. The Protestant Ethic of Work

The influence upon ecclesiastical ethics of the pecuniary individualism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is strikingly in evidence in the church's attitude towards the poor, the unemployed, or those classes and individuals who are the innocent victims of modern economic maladjustments. The triumph of Puritanism meant the glorification of work. Work was viewed as the fruitful source not only of wealth and honor but also of character and spiritual worth. Idleness and poverty in the case of any able-bodied individual were considered evidences of sinful sloth. For only the sinful degeneracy of human nature prevents the physically able man from obeying the law of God and nature in work. The church did not recognize, therefore, the able-bodied poor who were the unfortunate victims of circumstances. The charity of the dissenter included only the cripples, the widows and orphans, " God Almighty's poor ". The Protestant ethic felt responsibility only for poverty that was a part of the plan of an all-wise God; it had no pity for those who had become poor through man's inhumanity to man. On the other hand, to succor the able-bodied poor might possibly defeat the divine moral régime that achieves moral discipline through the pinch of poverty.

It is amazing, the extent to which this doctrine permeated all classes of Protestant Christianity. Hartlib, Milton's friend, writes, " The law of God saith: ' He that will not work, let him not eat.' This would be a scourge and smart whip for idle persons, that they would not be suffered to eat until they wrought for it." Similar ideas are reflected in the writings of the liberal-minded Franklin towards the middle of the eighteenth century. In a letter to Peter Collinson, May 9, 1753, occurs this statement, " To relieve the misfortunes of our fellow-creatures is concurring with the Deity; it is godlike; but if we provide encouragement for laziness, and support for folly, may we not be found fighting against the order of God and nature, which perhaps has appointed want and misery

as the proper punishment for, and caution against, as well as necessary consequences of, idleness and extravagance? Whenever we attempt to amend the scheme of Providence, and to interfere with the government of the world, we had need be circumspect, lest we do more harm than good."

But the traditional Protestant ethic was not satisfied with simply acknowledging work and want as parts of the disciplinary and punitive scheme of Providence. This scheme must be supplemented by the workhouse or "house of correction". This institution was prompted by no large sense of social responsibility towards those less fortunate in the economic struggle. The Protestant ethic did not recognize the duty of securing work for the unemployed and for reasons that should now be plain. It was thought that God had provided in his infinite wisdom work for all who were willing to work. The command given Adam and his descendants to earn their bread in the sweat of their brows did not contemplate an age of monopolies and a vast industrial order with its labor problem. The establishment of the workhouse, therefore, was thought to be in harmony with the divine plan for punishing the lazy and arousing in the unregenerate heart the impulse to work that had been weakened by sin. Schooled as has been the churchly ethic for generations in this essentially anti-social attitude towards poverty and unemployment, it can be readily understood what a thoroughgoing *volte face* must take place in the thinking of men before they can even understand the pressing economic problems of the modern industrial order. Here, be it remembered, we are to seek the explanation of the strange lethargy that the ecclesiastical conscience has shown towards the burning issues that center around capital and labor. Men do not throw off the habits of thought and feeling that have come down through generations, especially if they are sanctioned by religion.

Hardly less unfortunate has been the disciplinary effect of the traditional churchly ethic of Protestantism upon the thinking of men in regard to the problem of wages. The Protes-

tant ethic has thrown its influence almost invariably in favor of a low wage scale, though in doing so Protestantism broke with many of the traditions of the past. Even the spendthrift Charles I strove through legislation to assure to the workman some share in the profits of the monopolists. The reign of Elizabeth is famous for its acts to protect the laborer and the poor. The problem of the *justum pretium* or "just wage" was debated at length by Aquinas and the doctors of the middle ages. With the triumph of the pecuniary individualism of the Puritan middle-class traders of the seventeenth century, all this passed away. The prudential virtues of thrift and diligence demanded of the small capitalist and manufacturer that he employ his men at the lowest wage possible. Furthermore, economic freedom required that no restrictions be placed upon the labor market. Finally, there was the religious sanction for the low wage on the ground that it heightened the disciplinary effect of labor as the divinely ordained instrument for the development of character. This theory of wages is reflected in writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though we no longer detect its religious background. As late as 1770 we find this language in a work on wages, "The only way to make the poor temperate and industrious, is to lay them under a necessity of laboring all the time they can spare from meals and sleep, in order to procure the common necessaries of life".

It was by no means fortunate, therefore, that the beginnings of the Protestant ethic of wealth were characterized by "the rejection of all charitable instincts in dealing with labor and unemployment. . . . The great liberation effected by Cromwell has loosed the bonds of ecclesiastical thraldom and abolished every kind of restriction upon individual liberty. But the Cromwellians had no understanding for the social subjection of certain large classes, and no kind of sympathy for new ideas of the distribution or nationalization of wealth."[1] The traditions of two centuries ago still condition the thinking of the average church-member on all the great problems having

[1] Levy, *Economic Liberalism*, p. 83.

to do with wages and the distribution of wealth. Institutionalized Christianity of the Protestant type has not changed its attitude. Critics should remember this who are constantly pointing out the supineness of the churchly ethic in the face of vast economic problems or the inconsistency of giving lip homage to the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount and yet doing business on the basis of competitive pecuniary individualism. Those who condemn the ecclesiastical ethic as fundamentally disloyal to the lofty altruism of Jesus will be less harsh if they remember the historical background of present ideas. One has but to read the sermons of the saintly Richard Baxter and his contemporaries to discover that the traditional Protestant ethic of work and wealth has far more in common with Adam Smith than with the Sermon on the Mount.

The charge is often made that institutionalized Christianity has obscured, not to say perverted, the eternal human note in the ethic of Jesus. It will be seen that this charge is not without a measure of truth. The churchly ethic of wealth has developed in the closest intimacy with the existing capitalistic order. They are, in fact, but different phases of one and the same great social process. This should enable the critic to sympathize somewhat perhaps with the singular helplessness of the ecclesiastical conscience during the recent bitter struggle to free American democracy from the rampant individualism of our modern plutocracy. This helplessness was born of an inability to break with the past. The church, like all great institutions, clings most tenaciously to its traditions. Hence the indisputable fact that in an age calling for moral heroism, for men who like Amos in the brave days of old can cry, "Let judgment roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream," the church was on the whole apathetic. It was not the ecclesiastical conscience which aroused the country to the iniquity of the wasteful individualism when vast fortunes were amassed through the ruthless exploitation of the resources of a continent. The financiers, the trust-builders themselves, not the churchmen, first made headway

against the greed of this senseless pioneer ethic and laid the basis for a reorganization of business. It was not the ecclesiastical conscience which aroused in men the dream of an industrial democracy in which wealth is held as a sacred trust and where society is dealt with as a living organism and not "a more or less adventitious assemblage of individuals". There is something almost pathetic in the utter moral bewilderment of the average bourgeois church-member when faced with the problems of the new era upon which we are just entering. His gospel of personal salvation and personal responsibility to God, his admiration of the prudential virtue of thrift, his naïve worship of money-power, his belief in the sacrosanct character of private property, his insistence upon unrestricted competition—these are tragically out of place in a highly mutualized and interdependent social order which has been forced to discard the outworn philosophy of another age. These remarks have in mind only the traditional institutional point of view. It is of course true that in every age the church has had leaders who have stood for a more social point of view and to-day their number is increasing rapidly.

§ 5. The Anti-intellectualism of the Christian Ethic

Few factors have proven such a grievous hindrance to the beneficent march of science as the mistaken intellectual loyalties of the churchly ethic. It has been asserted that the misguided zeal of ecclesiastics who thwarted the scientific beginnings of Roger Bacon and his successors and turned the most brilliant intellects of the middle ages into the barren and tortuous realms of scholastic theology set back the world a century or more in its efforts to master the great problems of disease, scientific method, and social efficiency. The thousands of innocent lives yearly sacrificed to such diseases as consumption, cancer, scarlet fever or pneumonia is the price moderns are paying for the orthodoxy of their forbears.

The severest critics of the ecclesiastical ethic in matters of the intellect are to be found among churchmen themselves. Concerning the two great gifts of the Reformation to modern

life, namely, right of free inquiry and liberty of conscience, the learned Canon of Westminster asserts, "Of both these excellent and precious possessions, the Jachin and Boaz of the temple of healthly national life, it is but the unvarnished truth to say that the ecclesiastical executive has been the persistent, and often the unscrupulous, antagonist. The post-Reformation church has been preoccupied with the exigencies of ecclesiastical politics, and the end of discipline has seemed to be rather the preservation of ecclesiastical allegiance than the maintenance of a high morality." [1] Father Tyrrell, the brilliant protagonist of modernism, uses the following language in his reply to the lenten pastoral of Cardinal Mercier: "Can we say that what your Eminence would call 'teachings of the church' enforced under all sorts of pains and penalties, temporal and eternal, has notably hastened and facilitated the discovery of truth as to the nature and history of the world and of man? Is it not just in the name of revelation that the whole authority of the church over conscience has been brought to bear against one science after another, so as, if possible, to strangle them in their birth? If the church had had her way, if reason had not refused to listen to her outside the narrow limits of her teaching commission, our scientific conceptions of to-day would be those of the Bible. We should still be burning old women on the charge of evil eye or of intercourse with the devil; we should be treating epilepsy, hysteria, and insanity as diabolical possession; we should be urging prayer and exorcism instead of medicine, surgery, and hygiene; we should be ringing consecrated bells against storm demons and earth-shakers; the chemist would be a magician; the money-lender an excommunicate." [2]

We gain a much more sympathetic understanding of this age-long struggle between the secular and the ecclesiastical ethic on questions involving intellectual loyalties, a struggle that has sadly warped the minds of men, when we remind ourselves that the master motive of the church has never been

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 143.
[2] *Mediaevalism*, p. 124 f.

knowledge but salvation. Institutional Christianity has always been more or less anti-intellectualistic. Paul, the great organizing genius who first faced the pagan world as a propagandist for the new faith, gives as his reason for daring to carry the gospel to Rome, the cultural seat of the empire, that this gospel is " the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth ". The representative of the churchly ethic of to-day, when faced by the challenge of science and philosophy, cries out just as exultingly as did Paul, " For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness ". The demand of men was for soul peace. Seneca, one of the noblest spirits of the time, expressed the temper of his age when he said *omnis vita supplicium est.* Escape was offered the tortured spirit by a mystical appropriation of divine power through faith.

Faith, or an emotional attitude, was thereby given precedence over the critical and rationalizing function of the intellect. Indeed it was the master-motive of salvation through faith that in time aroused the scientific interests and provided the problems for the intellect of the church, as is shown in the case of Augustine. It follows, therefore, that there was little place among the interests of the church fathers for knowledge for its own sake; the desire for knowledge was always subordinated to the desire for salvation. In so far as the intellect threw light upon the what and how of salvation it was welcomed. But the all-absorbing need of health of soul forced into a secondary place every line of effort or inquiry that did not directly contribute to this religious end. The rôle of the intellect was at first to provide material for religious instruction, the dogmatic support for the message of salvation or apologetic defense of the new faith. As other fields of intellectual endeavor such as education, science, and philosophy began to develop they were mastered and made to play the rôle of *ancillae theologiae.* Theology was the queen of the sciences because she dealt with the supreme problem, the eternal welfare of the soul.

The trend, therefore, of the ecclesiastical ethic was and still continues to be essentially anti-intellectualistic. It emphasizes the subjective and emotional phase of experience which appears in faith and in the mystical element in religious experience. It starts, not with the objective and concrete world of things and human institutions with which science deals but with the inner world of emotions and sentiments; "The kingdom of God is within you". The rôle of the intellect is secondary, namely, to interpret as best it can this subjective and more or less intangible world of inner experience. Conduct has significance only as it manifests this inner state; Christianity is only secondarily and by implication ethical. Its essence lies in the "mystery of godliness", "the mystery that hath been hid from all ages and generations," namely, "Christ in you the hope of glory". The middle ages were true to this, the deepest note of Christianity, when it set the *vita contemplativa,* with its consummation in the *unio mystica* of the soul with God, as the goal of existence. Any attempt to utilize the Christian ideal in the interest of a strictly social and secular purpose can succeed only by ignoring this fundamental characteristic. It goes without saying, therefore, that the coldly critical and impersonal search for truth for its own sake, peculiar to science and philosophy, must play a secondary part in the attainment of the Christian ideal.

§ 6. Dogma the Guardian of Faith

It was inevitable, under these conditions, that dogma should become the guardian of faith. For an ideal that rests upon inner experience must in time fall back upon dogma or be rendered futile and impotent through the vacillations of the emotional life itself. Hence the church emerged from the dangerous contest with the Gnostics thoroughly committed to a dogmatic and authoritarian conception of truth and that in the interest of self-preservation. The canon, the creed, the priesthood and sacraments were absolutely necessary for the preservation of anything like uniformity and agreement in subjective experiences and in religious traditions. Institutional

Christianity has for the same reason favored from that day to the present an authoritarian ethic. It has insisted upon the final authority of a body of dogma, a closed canon of sacred writings, and certain sacraments and ordinances as the prerequisites to the perpetuation of certain inner attitudes towards God and the corresponding type of conduct. It is difficult to see how the church could do otherwise without losing its identity and becoming something quite different from the past. The inability of institutionalized Christianity to accept wholeheartedly the principle of evolution is, in the light of these facts, perfectly intelligible. To acknowledge that truth is constantly changing and may become something quite different to later generations is to accept a measure of intellectual and moral values for which there is no place in an authoritarian ethic.

This anti-intellectualism enables us to understand why the unscientific, not to say irrational, element present even in the teaching of Paul, still lingers to tinge the atmosphere of the ecclesiastical ethic. "But the real chief duty of man," writes Canon Danks, "is rightness not of opinion, but of conduct, of spirit, of life; and the chief pre-occupation of the ordination candidate is not speculative at all but devotional, spiritual, practical; not the teaching of men's minds so much as the saving of their souls or characters, and the attainment of that social ideal which Christ called the Kingdom of God".[1] The question is not raised as to how we can have right conduct without rightness of opinion for it is taken for granted that rightness of opinion is assured once for all through an infallible body of truth. Attention can be devoted entirely, therefore, to the immediate and practical matters of conduct, devotion, and service. The ecclesiastical conscience has ever been so impressed with the duty of saving the world that it has never taken the time to ask whether after all it understands the world.

This emphasis of the practical, the immediate, and the feasible in religion made possible by reliance upon dogma,

[1] "The Clergy and Free Inquiry," *Hibbert Journal,* Vol. 9, p. 368.

is especially grateful to the Anglo-Saxon temperament. It gives a comfortable feeling of concreteness; it enables one to bring his religion down to the level of a business transaction. With this practicality, indeed, often goes a fine scorn for the speculative thinker as the willing dupe of his own idle fancies—a scorn which is sometimes but a Diogenes' cloak for an intellectual self-confidence as imperturbable as it is uncritical. To be sure, anti-intellectualism is to-day the fashion both in religion and in philosophy. But any anti-intellectualism gives us pause when it is pushed to the extent that one glories in it as a religious asset. "One of our premiers once said," writes Principal Forsyth, "that the sterling British mind neither liked nor understood cleverness. How true it is. How fortunate that it is true. . . . The world is neither to be understood nor managed by sheer talent, logic, or knowledge. The greatest movements in the world have been irrational, or at least non-logical. And the irrationality of the world, the faith of a principle which flows underneath reason on the one hand, and of a power which rises beyond it on the other, and even seems to reverse it, has done more to keep religion quick and deep than any sense of the world's intelligent nature or consistent course. Faith, which is the greatest power of history, flourishes, and even exults, in the offense of the cross, and the paradox of the spirit." [1] This glorification of obscurantism will hardly appeal to a scientifically-trained generation. Even in religious matters we are no longer content to "muddle through" by sheer dint of blind faith and let the intellect tidy up the corners afterward.

It is through the spread of science that men have become convinced that truth on any subject can only be attained through long and arduous research. The difficulty of the attainment of truth and the sense of the relativity of our knowledge on the fundamental problems of existence has played no small part in educating the scientific mind into a high and holy regard for the truth. But let an indi-

[1] "Intellectualism and Faith," *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 11, p. 311.

vidual or a group of individuals become possessed by the conviction that ultimate truth on a problem as vital and as difficult as religion is to be gained through a simple emotional attitude and to a large extent in spite of the reason, and the result is a superficial and false conception as to the nature of truth. A mental atmosphere is created in which the cultivation of strict intellectual integrity is difficult. Hence the undeniable fact that a high and holy regard for truth is rare among theologians of the old school; it is a product of science. Laxity of thought is nowhere more in evidence than in religious matters. Any sort of apologetics or pseudo-science is thought justifiable provided it tends to support a religious belief. It may be seriously doubted whether there is anywhere in our modern life such widespread and unchallenged disregard of scientific thinking as in the setting forth of religious truth in the average pulpit.

When we bear in mind the suggestive power of an institution that employs by all the many-sided appeal of ritual, creed, sacred symbols, music, the spoken word, the crowd psychosis, and is sanctioned by the highest and holiest loyalties, we gain some idea of the vast power exercised by the church in shaping the intellectual standards of the average man. The following statement of Lecky's, made with reference to the middle ages, has its significance also for the present: "When, for example, theologians during a long period have inculcated habits of credulity, rather than habits of inquiry; when they have persuaded men that it is better to cherish prejudice than to analyze it; better to stifle every doubt of what they have been taught than honestly to investigate its value, they will at last succeed in forming habits of mind that will instinctively and habitually recoil from all impartiality and intellectual honesty. If men continually violate a duty they may at last cease to feel its obligations".[1] Towards the close of the middle ages human nature took fearful revenge for the shackling of the intellect through the ecclesiastical ethic. For during the twelfth century when an intellectual awakening began to stir in

[1] *History of European Morals,* Vol. I, p. 98.

Europe, the masses of men who had not been taught the meaning of honest doubt, mistook these strange uneasy whisperings for the voice of the devil and, turning upon each other in a terror-stricken attempt to stifle the spirit of unrest, burned innocent fellow-men as witches at the stake or tore them on the wheel. The witch-burning manias and heresy trials of the late middle ages were in part only a crude attempt to still the mental anguish of suspended judgment. Thus did human nature avenge itself against a purblind churchly ethic which in cursing doubt cursed the powers of reason and the legitimate result of its exercise. The code of ethics or the institution that stigmatizes honest doubt or reasoned disbelief chokes the spiritual life of man at its fountain-head and prepares for itself an inevitable day of reckoning.

§ 7. Authoritarianism and Morals

Given a system of ethics in which there is no place for development in the true sense, where moral science consists simply in elucidating and applying to new situations as they arise great ethical principles laid down authoritatively once for all, and it will be seen that we have a situation in which casuistry is encouraged. Familiar illustrations of what is meant are afforded by the effort of the average Sabbath-school teacher to reconcile the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount with prevailing ethical ideals in business and politics. Without any attempt at a scholarly understanding of the background of these utterances of Jesus, but with a naïve assumption that they must be true for all time and for every conceivable social order, the expositor proceeds to extract from them meanings which will fit modern conditions. In this wise these beautiful sayings are placed at the mercy of all the sophistical pros and cons, the forced and mechanical adjustments which logical ingenuity can devise. They become mere verbal supports upon which one may hang at will his arbitrary interpretations of what the unalterable principles of Christian ethic must be. Ethics becomes, thereby, merely an appanage of

theological or personal pre-possessions and has no just claims to independence or even respectability.

It is in this casuistical atmosphere that there arises what Nietzsche calls the "holy lie". In general, Nietzsche meant by the term any perversion of the truth that "is allowed in pursuit of holy ends". Psychologically, the "holy lie" is more than that. It is a form of self-deception that results from the organization of religious or other loyalties around ideas which are false or have become discredited. It is a familiar fact that every strongly organized system of sentiments tends to create its own standards of value. It seeks always to vouch for the truth of its ideas. From the standpoint of the miser's master passion of avarice whatever gratifies it is true and good, whatever thwarts it is untrue and vicious. It is also a familiar fact of psychology that every system of sentiments strives to become supreme and to subordinate all the other elements of personality to the end it seeks to realize. Hence, it is not uncommon where powerful sentiments become thoroughly organized around certain sets of ideas, as in religion, that this system of sentiments may dominate the entire personality and shape notions of truth as well as ideals of conduct.

The effect of an authoritarian ethic is to organize the emotions and sentiments around certain sacred objects such as a relic, the cross, the Bible, or the church. These objects take on in this wise unique authority and significance. The word of God and its official interpreter are taken up into the powerful system of religious sentiment of the individual believer and acquire thereby values which they do not possess when considered on their own merits. The emotions fed by the religious and moral teachings of the Bible overflow, as it were, and lend to the book a fictitious value from the standpoint of history or science. The powerful but uncritical emotional life leads captive reason and the critical powers. Intelligent persons constantly contend for the historical trustworthiness of the first chapters of Genesis but not because they provide satisfactory scientific explanations of the origin of the world or the begin-

nings of the race. The system of sentiment organized about the sacred book demands that nothing shall detract from its holiness and its power to satisfy religious needs. To admit that any part of it is a myth is felt to militate against this sentiment and is therefore rejected. There can be little doubt that the one factor which resisted and still resists most stubbornly all efforts to apply scientific method to the interpretation of the sacred scriptures is this organization of the religious sentiments and the false conceptions of truth to which it gives rise.

In a similar fashion, the clergy have suffered from false estimates of their character and their social significance. Throughout the middle ages the priest was forced to live the unreal, anti-social life of the celibate. In Protestantism the clergyman is always in danger of becoming more or less of a moral *poseur*. A false estimate is placed on his abilities so that his poorest jokes and most platitudinous discourses are praised as creations of genius; accustomed to being listened to as an oracle, too often he becomes impatient of criticism and does not fight fair in an argument; as the expounder of a final body of authoritative truth he feels no incentive to patient criticism or to originality of thought; he is made the recipient of privileges and immunities both legal and social which often endanger his own sense of manliness and self-respect and do not elevate him in the esteem of the secular ethic; by no fault of his own his character is often pauperized, his thought and vocabulary stereotyped, his moral judgments dulled by privilege and convention. These are the results of the artificial atmosphere of an authoritarian ethic.

Finally, an authoritarian ethic militates against a vigorous morality in that it encourages the separation of religious devotion from civic righteousness. Observers have noted a certain moral obtuseness among Latin peoples long subjected to the casuistical atmosphere of an authoritarian ethics and the confessional. But this "non-moral type of Christianity" is not confined to Latin peoples. It is found in communities where Protestantism of the most pronounced type has long enjoyed

complete sway. It is encouraged even by the pulpit and in the service. Many luxurious church edifices give the impression that their chief function is to provide for their membership all the instrumentalities for the cultivation of subjective emotional states, deeply devotional and pious frames of mind which bring to the individual keen enjoyment and inner peace, but have little or no bearing upon conduct. At most, they encourage religiosity, a "non-moral Christianity", which may and often does flourish in the midst of a community cursed with political graft and economic injustice. This self-centered and socially impotent ecclesiastical ethic has done more perhaps than any one other factor to discredit the moral leadership of the church. It illustrates the truth of Nietzsche's dictum that religion is constantly being shipwrecked upon morals.

§ 8. The Positive Contributions of the Church to the Social Conscience

Our discussion of the church thus far has been negative and critical. Those features in the structure and the function of the ecclesiastical ethic have been stressed that have been a hindrance rather than a help in the solution of modern problems. The church is not free from the limitations that inevitably beset a great and authoritative institution that enjoys a vast power over the hearts of men. To institutionalize is to delimit. Every institution is more or less self-centered. There is, however, another side to the picture. For it would be exceedingly unfair not to note the very real and permanent contribution of institutionalized Christianity to the social conscience of to-day. We can approach the proper estimate of the church's positive contribution by reminding ourselves of the forces that have operated to bring about the present status of the church in society.

In the first place, social forces are assigning to the church in modern life a rôle that is essentially departmental. Contrast the position of the church to-day in a great city such as New York with the rôle of the church during the middle ages, in Geneva under Calvin, in Puritan England of Baxter's day, or

in New England in the days of the Mathers and Jonathan Edwards. The direct influence of the church as a social institution is by no means as comprehensive and authoritative as it once was. This is far from saying that the ideals of Christianity are absent from modern life. In fact, one explanation for the diminished rôle of the church as an institution in modern life is found in the fact that the values for which Christianity has stood have become part and parcel of the thought and life of men. Institutionalized Christianity is less influential, therefore, because there is no longer the same need for the use of institutional forms in the satisfaction of the religious needs. Religion itself has become a more sublimated and spiritualized thing in the lives of men and women. It has taken on forms that refuse to be bent to fit the hard and more or less mechanical setting of creed and ritual. But this very emancipation of the spiritual loyalties that seems to prompt the modern man to reject institutional Christianity has only been made possible by the age-long discipline of the thought and feeling of men by the church. It is, therefore, to a very large extent the church that has emancipated men from the necessity of her institutional forms.

In this process of narrowing the scope of the church it is possible to note several stages. The church during the middle ages was the keeper of the social and political conscience: she provided the teachers and the libraries, she taught men through her great monasteries the principles of agriculture, she was the patron of art, the protector of the marriage tie, the defender of the weak. As a result of the Reformation the church ceased to be the keeper of the political conscience; church and state were separated. Under the leadership of such men as Roger Bacon, Galileo, and Descartes the realm of science gradually emancipated itself and insisted upon its right to determine its own measure of value and to set up its own ideals of truth. Similarly, education underwent a process of secularization, especially in America, and became freed from ecclesiastical control. Art, that during all ages has owed a great debt to the church, has now become thoroughly secularized so far as

its relation to institutionalized Christianity is concerned. The church no longer controls business ethic or settles industrial problems. There has been, consequently, a gradual narrowing of the sphere of the church that has only been accentuated by the increasing complexity of our modern life. To-day a stage has been reached where it is impossible for any one institution to dominate all the interests of society.

The question arises, then, what is to be the rôle of the church in our modern life? What are the particular functions which she must fulfil? In at least three respects it would appear that the church has a rôle of great importance for the social conscience: (*a*) as the conserver of values, (*b*) through the ministry of comfort, and (*c*) as an agency making for moral and spiritual inspiration.

If the history of institutionalized Christianity teaches us anything, it is that religion, especially in its great historical forms, is essentially conservative. It is concerned not so much with the creation as with the conservation of values. For this reason religion does not have to do primarily with those phases of life where values are being created or where values are being destroyed. Religion accepts and gives accredited place to values after they have once made good in human experience. Religion is the last to discard values after they have undergone the fire of criticism and been found wanting. For this reason religion is hostile to the new and the untried in human experience; it is hospitable to the old and familiar. If religion is born of the will-to-believe and if the will-to-believe is the creation of the will-to-live, it is evident that religion's object is a world that is congenial to man's hopes and ambitions. The very essence of religion is expressed by William James when he said that the world may indeed burn up or freeze, but with a God in it the religious soul feels that all cannot be lost. He is the Great Conserver of Values.

This fundamental note of religion as the belief in the conservation of values has important implications for the rôle of religion both in the past and in the present. It explains why institutional religion has always been opposed to the heretic,

the iconoclast, and the innovator. Movements for reform have almost invariably been begun by those outside of institutionalized Christianity and generally in the face of its bitter opposition. In the course of time, however, when the reform group have made good and the values for which they stand have gained social recognition, and are recognized as of fundamental importance for the community, these values are usually absorbed by the church and skilfully utilized for the spread of her influence. Hence, it has happened again and again in the middle ages that sects have arisen in revolt against the abuses of institutionalized Christianity and met with persecution. In time, however, as the movements they represented have gathered force, and as the values for which they stood have found more conscious formulation, they have been sanctioned by the church and given places of honor and power.

This explains why institutional religion has always been hospitable toward all ideas that have so embedded themselves in the thought and life of the masses of men that they have become constituent principles of thought and action. This was true of the old geo-centric astronomy which was overthrown by Galileo. This was true of the " peculiar institution " of the old slave-holding South. When slavery had become thoroughly identified with the economic and political and social life of the South it found in institutionalized Christianity a most ardent defender. Something closely approximating this can be traced in communities where economic principles such as high protection have become axiomatic in the thought of men. They are seldom challenged by the representatives of institutionalized Christianity. Here we have the fundamental rôle of religion as the conserver of values asserting itself.

This conservative rôle of institutionalized religion in the community enables us to understand the relation of the church to the social conscience. We must not expect institutionalized Christianity to head any great revolutionary movement for reform. There is nothing in past history to justify any such assumption. The church's contribution has been that of a balance wheel. She insists upon holding on to the good that

has been tried and admits new values only after they have undergone the fire of criticism. The church, then, serves to stabilize the thinking of the average man at the higher levels of his spiritual and moral loyalties. It is most important to have firmly established in the community and enjoying the respect of all a powerful institution that will safeguard the time-honored beliefs of men in regard to what they hold supremely worth while in life. It may be freely granted that such a body of highly-institutionalized sentiment may often stand in the way of progress. Behind it may find shelter the hypocrite, the reactionary, and even the downright anti-social individual. But, on the other hand, it is also true that such a body of sentiment serves to anchor the convictions of the average man and provides him with an authoritative body of principles for meeting his problems as they rise from day to day. Even in the case of the reformer, the rebel or the radical, this stubborn and entrenched body of loyalties plays the rôle of a convenient foil, a point from which he may launch his own thought even though it be by way of bitter protest and criticism.

Closely associated with this role of conserver of values is another function of the church, namely, the ministry of comfort. What impresses every careful observer of the average church is the conventional character of the ideas, the endless repetition of old familiar doctrines, the singing of the same hymns, the assumption of the same physical postures in the service, the intoning of the same words in the ritual. This is done not only from Sabbath to Sabbath, but from year to year and century to century. One cannot help asking why this endless repetition? The answer is to be found in the psychology of the religious experience. Religious values are rooted in systems of sentiment. At the core of these systems of sentiments or beliefs lie certain comprehensive ideas as to the soul, God, man, sin, evil, and the like. There can be little doubt that the average church-member attends service not to satisfy intellectual needs but to find reorientation upon these fundamental issues of life. There is an imperative need for some escape from the discouragements, the heart-aches, and the

baffling mysteries of daily life. To feel one's self once more at one with the spiritual forces of the universe brings peace and strength. There is, therefore, in every act of worship something akin to what Aristotle called the " katharsis of the feelings ". This explains why the repetition of ritual and even the presentation of conventional orthodox doctrines are satisfying. The appeal is not so much to the intellect as to the emotions and it is the emotions that provide the dynamic of life.

The function of the church that is usually thrust most into the foreground is that of moral and spiritual leadership. Here, however, we face serious problems. There can be no real leadership without teaching. Indeed the command in the beginning was, " Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations ". There can be no effective teaching without intellectual freedom and loyalty to the truth. It was the great Teacher who said, " Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free ". Here, it must be frankly confessed, we find possible conflict with the other rôle of the church as the conserver of values and the bitter antagonist of the heretic or the innovator. The future influence of the church depends to no small degree upon how she succeeds in uniting these two elements. Heretofore the tendency has been to make the rôle of teacher subordinate to that of the conserver of values. Teaching has been largely the imparting of a fixed and authoritative body of truth. Can the church of the future succeed in adopting the scientist's ideal of truth without sacrificing her cherished rôle as the conserver of values? Will she be able to place loyalty to the truth above mere authority? We cannot bring ourselves to believe that Plato's dictum, " Let us follow the argument whithersoever it leads us " is inherently opposed to the demand of the human heart for a " Thus saith the Lord ".

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CHAPTER XVI

THE SCHOOL AND THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

§ 1. The Social Function of the School

Education viewed from the social point of view includes all those disciplinary forces by which the group makes sure that the individual shares in its purposes and interests. Education from the individual point of view is the unfolding of capacities and powers through the instrumentalities offered by the group. Both the individual and social conceptions of education are but phases of what Professor Dewey has called the process of " continuous self-renewal " peculiar to society as well as to all living and growing things. There are, then, two elements in the educational process, the social environment together with its preëstablished norms of conduct to which the individual must adjust himself and the individual's instinctive capacities that are shaped by this process of adjustment.

It follows, therefore, that society as a whole is the great educator. This is especially true in primitive society where education is unconscious for the most part, consisting of a " non-progressive adjustment " to fixed customs, taboos, and a traditional way of life. But even in advanced civilization the school and all the purposeful agencies of modern education never supplant this subtle and unconscious educative effect of the environment. Our most fundamental conceptions of value are arrived at, for the most part, without conscious reflection. We cannot recall when they took shape in our minds. They have been taken for granted. We have simply absorbed them from the pervasive texture of the human relationships that have enmeshed us from infancy. Their finality is to be found in just this unquestioning attitude we have always sustained toward them; they appear to belong to the eternal order of

things. There is, therefore, a very real sense in which the social conscience, which includes this heritage of ethical norms builded unconsciously into the structure of men's characters, is a far more effective moral educator than the school can ever hope to be.

The school arose as a necessary means of maintaining group continuity. For as human culture increased and the gap between child and adult widened it became necessary to create a special institution for the maintenance of the process of "continuous self-renewal" so necessary to the group. Herein lies the rôle of the school as a social institution. The school functioned as an instrument of social control at first through the transmission of a body of ideals and practices. That is to say, the earlier school did not control the masses of men directly. It gave to a select group a certain training that enabled them to direct the lives of their more ignorant fellows. With the expansion and democratization of the school, education is no longer restricted to the favored few, though there goes hand in hand with the effort to democratize knowledge a selective process by which even a democracy seeks to assure to itself efficient leadership. Furthermore, the school is being stressed, especially since the rise of big business, as an instrument for attaining economic mastery. Nations are beginning to recognize what an effective agency they have in the school for assuring material prosperity and the conquest of foreign markets. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, there has arisen in modern democracy a growing appreciation of the school as the chosen instrument of a progressive community in its efforts for reform. We have now to ask how the school gained this position of honor and influence in American democracy.

§ 2. The Colonial School

Those who are fond of visualizing in diagrammatic form any process, and their number is not small, can picture to themselves an unbroken line stretching from 1636, the date of the founding of Harvard, to the present and this will represent

the college. Parallel with this line is a second, beginning slightly earlier than 1636 and extending down to the middle of the eighteenth century after which it begins to waver and disappear; this is the colonial grammar school, the feeder of the colonial college. Starting about the time the grammar school begins to disappear, becoming more clearly defined towards the end of the eighteenth century and reaching well into the third quarter of the nineteenth century when it also begins to waver and disappear is a third line corresponding to the academy, the typical American educational institution of the middle or transitional period. Still a fourth line starts during the second quarter of the last century and grows ever more vigorous as the line of the academy fades out and this is the line that represents the rise and growth of the high school, the most typical educational institution of modern American democracy. If we add to this the rise of the great unified state systems of the middle and far West after the civil war and the differentiation of the college from the university or graduate school signalized in the founding of Johns Hopkins in 1877 we have a fairly complete bird's-eye view of our educational history.

It will be seen that American educational history falls into three periods, the colonial from 1636 to 1783, the transitional from 1783 to 1876, and the present. The schools of the colonial period were imitations of English models. Such men as John Cotton, Ezekiel Cheever, Roger Williams, and others simply reproduced as best they could the schools in which they had received their training. Harvard was but the reproduction of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Both grammar school and college were dominated by the religious interest. Among the first "rules and precepts" of Harvard we find the following: "Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the maine end of his life and studies is, TO KNOW GOD AND JESUS CHRIST WHICH IS ETERNAL LIFE". In fact, the earlier college was but a necessary instrument for carrying out the ideal of a theocratic and aristocratic society in which every problem, domestic, political, as well as

religious, tended to resolve itself into a controversy between different sects over some ism of theology.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that the colonial college, because of its intensely religious atmosphere was therefore impractical and devoid of social contacts, as is too often the case with the modern small college. Quite the contrary, the educational ideal in both college and grammar school was one of public service. The idea that the college exists for culture pure and simple or primarily for sectarian purposes was totally foreign to the minds of the founders of Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, or Princeton. Both the cultural and the religious elements were subordinated to the performance of social service in church and state. The college graduate and especially the minister was the moral and spiritual leader of the community. Hence scholarship, though narrow and poverty-stricken from the modern point of view, was vitalized by close contact with the community and the responsibilities of leadership.

§ 3. The School of the Transitional Period

If the school system of the colonial period with its fundamental cleavage between the college and the grammar school on the one hand and the elementary school on the other was undemocratic, it reflected, nevertheless, especially in colonies such as Massachusetts, a compact body of moral and religious sentiment. The colonial school was the effective instrument of the social conscience of the period. During the middle or transitional period, however, the situation was very different. For the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries saw the breakdown of the old colonial system with its class distinctions. Under the leadership of Jefferson and later Jackson arose a vigorous democracy drawing its inspiration for the most part from the pioneer West. Into this youthful and inchoate democracy the academy fitted most happily. It met the demand of an individualistic age for a school more plastic than grammar school and college that would lend itself to differences in creed or locality. In poverty-stricken com-

munities often sectarianism had to be banished in the interest of economy. Thus did the academy foreshadow our secularized modern school system. The new democracy demanded a training less aristocratic and more practical than that of the colonial college. This the academy provided, for it looked in two ways, taking over the work of the grammar school in preparing for college while teaching more practical subjects as direct equipment for life. Hence the academy forced the college to socialize its curriculum by introducing scientific studies and anticipated the modern "college of the people", the high school.

Through the academy found expression the budding spirit of American democracy. It was crude, having little appreciation of true culture or even of the real nature of democracy. It voiced a culture that created a most disagreeable impression upon foreigners with its boastfulness, its crudity, its overweening optimism, as Dickens has been at particular pains to tell the world in his sketches of American character. But in it lay the promise and the potency of a great future. The academy with its individualism, its composite character of part college and part high school, its Protean characteristics, its general lack of high scholarly ideals, its intense Americanism, its inability to integrate itself successfully either with college or elementary school owing to its local and largely provincial character, was to all intents and purposes a transitional institution. It reflected faithfully the lack of mature social consciousness in education as well as in all other matters. Hence it has failed to hold its own in competition with the high school through which the educational ideals of a mature democracy are finding expression.

§ 4. The Rise of the Democratic Ideal in Education

If the dominating note of the educational ideal of the colonial era was religious and aristocratic, that of the middle period revolutionary and transitional, we must call the ideal of the modern period democratic and social. The forces that have combined to make the school more and more the chosen instru-

ment of a self-conscious democracy are many and varied. Foremost among them stands the spirit of the vigorous pioneer democracy that arose in connection with the development of the vast national domain of the West, a spirit that has dominated the life of the nation not only in business and in politics but likewise in education. This spirit did not become articulate so far as education was concerned until the fourth decade of the last century. Legislators were largely indifferent to the problem of education. In a poverty-stricken pioneer country the tax-payers were unwilling to assume the financial burden of the school. The groups and localities had little sense of social responsibility. The old aristocratic colonial educational ideal was still strong; the better classes often would not send their children to a public school because it smacked of charity. Denominationalism opposed a secularized school. A great democratic system of education was the dream of men like Jefferson and Monroe; it had little basis in popular conviction.

But forces were at work tending to quicken the social spirit in educational matters. The pressure of the problems of democracy gradually created an appreciation of the school as a social institution. At the beginning of our national life conditions were comparatively simple; we were to all intents and purposes still a pioneer people. The home, the farm, and the apprentice system provided much of the practical training for life. Agriculture was the prevailing occupation. The period from 1800 to 1850 saw an unparalleled expansion in both population and industry. The application of steam to transportation, of electricity to communication, and the multiplication of labor-saving devices vastly increased the capacity for production, set men free from the exacting toil of food production, enabled them to concentrate in large cities, gave them leisure, and quickened their interest in the higher things of life. All this increased the demand for knowledge to meet these new conditions. Finally the spirit of democracy, becoming ever more intelligent and self-conscious, was making for religious toleration, for freedom of individual initiative, for the

humanitarian spirit. Men were full of visions of political and social Utopias. The most striking illustration of this spirit of ferment appeared in the literary renaissance of New England and the Transcendentalism of Emerson and the Concord School.

By the end of the fourth decade of the nineteenth century we find that the spirit of democracy had effected a complete change in educational ideals. The doctrine of free education for all was now proclaimed as a right. Universal education was urged as the condition prerequisite to the preservation of democracy. This culminated in the great movement for a democratized secondary school system, initiated by Horace Mann in Massachusetts in 1837 and subsequently adopted throughout the country. The high school, the product of this movement, is par excellence the educational institution of American democracy. This is evinced by the fact that it arose in the city where the spirit of democracy was more intensely alert and intelligent, and secondly by the sanctions appealed to by those that championed it. Hon. George S. Boutell, secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, said in an address delivered 1856, "The distinguishing difference between the advocates of endowed schools and of free schools is this: those who advocated the system of endowed academies go back in their arguments to one foundation, which is that in education of the higher grades the great masses of the people are not to be trusted. And those who advocate a system of free education in high schools put the matter where we have put the rights of property and liberty, where we put the institutions of law and of religion—upon the public judgment. And we will stand there. If the public will not maintain institutions of learning, then, I say, let institutions of learning go down."

By the middle of the last century, therefore, there was a growing conviction that a free educational system was an obligation resting upon the states, that this system makes for efficiency in industry and for better citizenship because placing in the hands of a free and intelligent democracy a powerful agency

for progress. The changes that have taken place in the school since then have but made more articulate these great ideals of democracy. To the school democracy looks for the Americanization of the immigrant, for the closer integration and moral enlightenment of our amorphous city populations, for the provision of industrial and vocational training made necessary by the rapid industrial expansion of the nation during the last generation, and finally for aid in the correction of the political, social, and economic ills to which American democracy has fallen heir as a result of unparallelled prosperity. "The ideas taught in the school to-day become the actuating principles of democracy to-morrow. . . . Our state governments are weak and inefficient, we say; the school must then teach, and teach in some effective manner, the principles of strong and effective government. Our city governments are corrupt, we hear; fundamental moral and economic principles must then be taught to the masses, so that they may realize the importance of civic righteousness, and understand as well who ultimately pays the bills for all mismanagement. Our people waste their money and their leisure in idle and profligate ways, we say; a knowledge of values and of how to utilize leisure time must then be taught. . . . Through all the complicated machinery of the school, some way must be found to awaken a social consciousness as opposed to class consciousness, to bring out the important social and civic lessons, to point out our social and civic need, and to teach our young people how to live better and to make better use of their leisure time." [1]

§ 5. The Educational Aim and the Moral Ideal

Any intensive discussion of the relation of the school to the social conscience is faced at the start with the relation of the educational aim to the social aim and the bearing of both social and educational aim upon the moral aim. Even a cursory reading of recent educational literature shows much confusion and laxity of thinking at this point. The aim of education is commonly stated as "social efficiency" or the "socialization

[1] E. P. Cubberley, *Changing Conceptions of Education*, p. 65 f.

of the individual". That is, the educational aim is interpreted in terms of the social aim.

The sweeping identification of the educational with the social aim is open to criticisms. It assumes that education must be subordinated to the demands of the social process. The social aim is made to include the educational aim since the part is contained in the whole and finds its meaning in terms of the whole. This amounts to depriving the educator of all real initiative and powers of leadership. It places him at the mercy of the social process. He becomes merely the purveyor to society's needs and as society interprets those needs. He cannot place himself outside the social process and as critic advise and lead.

Furthermore, we miss in much of the educational literature of the day any clear statement as to the relation of the social and the educational to the ethical. On the whole, it seems to be tacitly assumed that the ethical aim is either identical with or subordinate to the social aim. Now it is evident that socialization or social efficiency is far from being identical with moral excellence. For character will vary with the type of socialization demanded. Socialization during the middle ages, in Calvinistic Geneva, in militaristic Germany, or in democratic America means very different things. The socialization sought by the college and grammar school of colonial days has little in common with that demanded by modern intensive democracy. Socialization is a relative term. If mere social efficiency is the test, Germany has probably produced the best type of education and hence the most morally valuable that the world has ever seen. If we reject the type of social efficiency sought in German education it is upon some other basis than that of mere social efficiency or socialization of the individual. That ultimate measure of values is evidently ethical rather than either social or educational.

The prevailing enthusiasm for "social efficiency" in education is the result of a revolt against older educational ideals that were personal and subjective. This emphasis of the social, the factual, and the utilitarian, while indicating a healthful re-

action, has reduced the ethical element in many cases to a negligible quantity. "Social efficiency" in many books on education is equivalent to ethical relativism or even ethical indifference. The older educators with their emphasis upon formal ethics and discipline made the moral life unreal, aristocratic, and impractical. Our modern educator often flattens out all ethical distinctions, takes the edge off the moral ought with such attractive and yet unpardonably vague generalizations as "social aim", "social efficiency," or "socialization". He often gives us the impression that ethics is but a phase of biology.

Viewing the educational problem from the broad moral point of view it must include at least three elements, first the Greek idea of *insight*, which means all that history, science, literature, and philosophy can contribute in the way of moral enlightenment, secondly, *goodness of disposition* which will incline to the pursuit of the true and the good without external coercion, and thirdly, *habituation of the will* through which the performance of socially valuable acts is assured in the most economical and expeditious fashion. To be truly moral, in other words, the educational process must acquaint with those great human values, a knowledge of which is indispensable to the solution of present-day problems. These values must not merely be assimilated intellectually; they must have a sure place in the affections of the masses of men so that they are loved for their own sakes. Finally men must be provided with habits and means of expression through which devotion to the best things may make itself effective in the practical affairs of life. It will be seen that the educator has not accomplished his purpose until the ideals for which he strives have become part and parcel of the social conscience of the community.

§ 6. The School and the Norms of the Social Conscience

What are the great ethical norms that the school should keep in mind in its effort to shape the social conscience? For

the oldest and still the most important duty of the school is the assurance of the continuity of the social heritage through the interpretation and transmission of moral traditions. The traditional democratic norms are freedom, equality, and fraternity. Two criticisms may be offered of the idea of freedom common to educational literature of the day. It draws its inspiration too much from the philosophy of Rousseau and his followers, and it fails to appreciate the ethical significance of work. We are fast coming to see the limitations of the doctrine of *laissez faire* in politics and economics. It is time that we recognize the limits of Rousseau's doctrine of spontaneous self-assertion and the training of the child through the results of its acts. Rousseauism fails to recognize the institutional and social phase of freedom. For freedom is not merely a matter of the assertion of native impulses. The Emersonian dictum, " Follow your whim," contains its own moral refutation. Freedom never becomes moral until there is an intelligent appreciation of the limits of one's acts. The morally free act is one that finds point and direction through social institutions, that draws its sanctions from the community. Law, authority, and the institutional life are not a hindrance to freedom; they make it possible, nay, more, are its indispensable prerequisites.

This social phase of freedom needs to be stressed in both school and society. We have insisted in kindergarten, high school, college, business, and politics, upon the necessity of free, untrammelled individual initiative. But we have neglected or stressed lightly the relation of this individual assertion to law and order. The secret of a mature, self-poised national character is found in the proper balance between these two phases. It is the basic problem of civilization just as it is the basic problem of democracy. The task of the school is to bring the prospective citizen to realize that in a democracy the individual himself must to a large extent achieve his freedom by recognizing its necessary limitations. Through the socializing influences of the school, such as student self-government, there is opportunity for teaching the individual that freedom

and authority are not in eternal opposition but are parts of one indissoluble moral and human whole.

Closely associated with the idea of freedom is the question of the ethical value of work. Many educators have gone to the extreme in their revolt against the Puritan doctrine of the disciplinary value of work reflected in John Locke's famous *Thoughts on Education*. Rousseau's sentimental glorification of the native impulses is more agreeable and more modern. Discipline in the sense of drudgery or toil is not only irksome but non-essential in character building, even downright immoral. We sometimes get the impression from recent educational literature that the study of the ancient languages and mathematics is pedagogically wicked. Is it true that, as we go from the level of play and free spontaneous self-assertion to that of toil and drudgery, we pass from the realm of the moral to that of the immoral? The question is well worth asking in view of the general movement to eliminate from the school all studies that do not call out the spontaneous and pleasurable exercise of power or else lead directly to practical and utilitarian ends.

If it be true, as the prevailing educational philosophy insists, that the school does not merely prepare for life but is life itself, then we may safely assert that any school from which drudgery has been banished is not life and does not prepare for life. For drudgery in the sense of being morally obligated to perform tasks that are unattractive and do not possess for us any inherent interest is an inescapable fact of life. It meets us at every level from that of the mill-hand to that of the great scientific investigator. It is by no means unknown in the experience of the artist. To be sure there is little moral value in forcing one's self to the performance of a thing simply because it is drudgery. One can appreciate the point of view of the railroad president who expressed a preference for men who had been forced to master one difficult and distasteful thing even though it be a Latin dictionary without necessarily endorsing his pedagogy. Drudgery is only moral of course in so far as it is rational or looks to some valuable end, though

that end may be remote and often unappreciated at the time. In the midst of the prevailing enthusiasm for the agreeable and the spontaneous it is well to remember that if the school is to be true to life it must turn out men and women tenacious of purpose and not lacking in toughness of moral fiber, an end never to be gained by following the primrose path of Rousseauism.

Most comprehensive of all the ethical norms and hence the most difficult to grasp in all its bearings is that of justice. In the life of the child and the adolescent the notion of justice takes on for the most part the form of fair-play. The concrete instances in which justice in the form of fair-play is constantly occurring in the family, the gang, or the school group are easily grasped. The basis is laid here for loyalty to the principle of fairness that will be enriched and enlarged through business, social or political relations. Not, however, until the principle underlying all these concrete instances has been grasped and has become an integral part of disposition so that it is loved and sought for its own sake has the norm of justice become socially valuable in the largest sense.

As the school becomes more efficient and expresses in conscious fashion the enlightened moral sentiment of the community it will become the concrete embodiment of the principle of social justice. For the school not only subjects the social heritage to a critical examination before it hands it on to the next generation; it is coming to select and test the human material. This means that the school is becoming society's chosen instrument for the distribution of individuals and classes. It seeks to prevent social adjustments from being made in arbitrary, accidental, and wasteful fashion. The "mute inglorious Miltons" with their eloquent protests against the vast stupidities of society will be less frequent in proportion as individual talent and ability are made determining factors in social adjustment. The school thus comes to embody in a measure the very spirit of social justice itself. It educates through the concrete contributions it makes to the solution of the social problem. We are discovering

that justice is not a matter of bestowing indiscriminately the largest possible amount of educational goods. To ignore vocational training and to insist upon providing a liberal education for all on the ground that this is democracy will result in the end in violating the fundamental principle of democracy, namely, justice. For the same reason it is unjust to thrust upon the immature boy or girl the claims of the vocational and the utilitarian in education without giving him an opportunity to discover whether he may not have some better contribution to make to society than merely to earn his bread.

Even more important in modern democracy than either freedom or equity is the notion of fraternity or the feeling of sympathetic like-mindedness. This is, after all, the fundamental state of mind that is required before either freedom or justice can be more than names. There must exist between groups and individuals, classes and conflicting interests, the sympathetic attitude that enables each to enter fully and intelligently into the position of the other. Where sympathy is absent, jealousy and hatred easily arise and strained situations dangerous to the integrity of true democracy. This is strikingly illustrated in the lack of sympathy between the industrial and capitalistic groups in American society. Where like-mindedness is lacking there can be no coöperation and no justice. Sympathy in this sense is more fundamental than mere gregariousness or even sociability. To secure true sympathy in the school there must be something more than the mere mechanical herding of boys and girls together within the walls of the same building. There must be real insight into the lives and the problems of others through the cultivation of the social imagination which enables one to live over the inner life of the other. The catholicity of interests and the natural unspoiled impulses of youth facilitate the cultivation of sympathy and the creation of a democratic like-mindedness.

The natural fruit of sympathy is the spirit of tolerance, one of the rarest of all the virtues and yet one absolutely necessary in a democracy. For tolerance is not a mere negative virtue. It means vastly more than the principle of *laissez*

faire. It implies a far deeper insight into the moral economy. Tolerance implies a recognition of the right of each to champion his own opinions in the interest of his own self-development even when those opinions may be throughly diverse from those of his fellows. Tolerance looks beyond the individual or the sect to the larger, richer life of the community as a whole. Tolerance, therefore, can only be cultivated from the whole or the social point of view. It is not at home in the atmosphere of the denominational school. But it should pervade the atmosphere and condition every thought and act of the public school. Where it has become an integral part of the character of the prospective citizenship we have one of the best guarantees for an intelligent solution of the problems of democracy.

Sympathetic like-mindedness, the spirit of fair-play and of tolerance should find concrete expression in coöperation. They are but the subjective correlatives of coöperation, and intelligent coöperation comes very near to expressing the very essence of practical democracy. It has been pointed out that of the three great forms of social organization that have arisen in the history of civilization, namely, dominance, competition, and coöperation, the last best expresses the spirit of man and is destined, therefore, to play the leading rôle in the human relationships of the future.[1] If the school, then, is to prepare for life in a democracy it should be animated throughout with the spirit of coöperation. We are just beginning to realize the practical possibilities for coöperation in the school.

§ 7. The Teacher and the Social Conscience

Of the three chief instruments utilized by the school as a moral agency, namely, personality, moral training, and moral instruction, the first two take decided precedence over the last in the elementary school. As between the personal influence of the teacher and the disciplinary effect of the school life it is probable, especially in the lower grades, that personality is the most important. And since by far the largest percentage of children is found in the lower grades of the

[1] J. H. Tufts, *The Ethics of Co peration*, pp. 5 f.

elementary school, it follows that the character of the teachers of these grades is of the utmost importance in forming the ethical ideals of the community.

A study of the composition of the teaching population of the elementary schools seems to indicate that apart from the legal and general factors such as training, age, experience, health, and the like affecting the selection of the teacher, there are other forces at work. As a result of the operation of social and economic conditions, " the intellectual possessions of the race are by rather unconscious selection left to a class of people who by social and economic station as well as by training are not eminently fitted for their transmission ". The teachers of the elementary school come predominantly from the farming class where there are large families and where there is economic pressure to enter teaching. Consequently, tastes of this group are not as a rule those of men and women who have had some leisure for the cultivation of the finer things of life. Their salaries, furthermore, are often less than those of the mechanic and the day laborer and effectually preclude the acquiring of cultured tastes even where there is the inclination. Low salaries also explain perhaps the complaint that there is a deterioration especially among the male teachers and that they come to-day from a lower social stratum than formerly. The situation has been aggravated by the increased cost of living. The joint result is that individuals of initiative and talent are discouraged from teaching. A premium is placed upon mediocrity. The profession has little to show in the way of standards or *esprit de corps*. Craft spirit is largely absent. Yet into the hands of this group is being committed the most important task of transmitting the culture of the past, conserving our great ethical traditions and shaping the ideals of the rising generation.

The problem is still further complicated by the increasing feminization of the teaching profession. In 1919 only 19.9% of our teachers were men. This large percentage of women, themselves mostly young and immature, two-thirds being under thirty, holding a position on the average only two terms and

remaining in the profession on the average only four years, creates a most serious problem for all interested in educational matters. The woman teacher does not as a rule bring to social questions the concreteness and vigor of the man; she does not look upon the teaching profession as permanent and hence refuses to submit to technical preparation and lacks professional pride; she is prone to accept lower wages and thus keep down the economic status of the group; she seldom becomes interested or active in political or communal matters. It has been asserted "teaching can never become a profession, with the social standing and rewards of other professions, until the number of men engaged in it is approximately as large as the number of women."

The status of the teacher is at its worst in the elementary school, where there is contact with the largest percentage of the youth of the community. But conditions at the level of high school and college are far from ideal. If the educative influence of his life and personality is to be effective, the teacher should be able to live a normal and contented existence, thoroughly identifying himself with the institutional life of the community. He should have a definite status, one quite as secure and respected as that of physician or lawyer. Too often he is treated as a mere hireling whose position in the institution he serves is hardly as secure as that of the unionized laborer in the mill. When, true to his convictions, he lifts his voice in protest or in criticism not seldom he is treated as an academic Ishmaelite and banished to the wilderness. This failure on the part of the community to accord to the teacher a respected and independent status is leading teachers to form unions, often identifying themselves with one group in the community, namely, the industrial workers. If this movement continues it will be interesting to observe what effect it will have upon the rôle of the teacher as the one who interprets and transmits to the next generation the fundamental ethical norms that compose the social conscience.

§ 8. The School and Moral Discipline

Only second in importance to the influence of the teacher upon the character of the child is the disciplinary effect of the school life. If the child is to be brought into sympathetic and intelligent relations with those great ethical traditions that make society possible, then the school must be made into "a vital social institution". That is to say, the school must constantly reproduce typical social situations. Where the school has not been socialized the pressure brought to bear on the child will appear arbitrary and negative. Moral habits are built up most effectively not through constant correction but rather through spontaneous self-assertion. In the average school, says Professor Dewey, duties are as a rule "distinctively school duties, not life duties. If we compare this with the well-ordered home we find that the duties and responsibilities which the child has to recognize and assume there are not such as belong to the family as a specialized and isolated institution, but flow from the very nature of the social life in which the family participates and to which it contributes. The child ought to have exactly the same motives for right doing and be judged by exactly the same standards in the school, as the adult in the wider social life to which he belongs."

After all, ethical norms when most effective do not appear on the surface of conduct. They are rather the implications, the rational interpretations of ways of acting. When we can assure a school life based upon social insight and an appreciation of the demands of society the ethical norms involved become concrete and living realities. Through conduct constantly repeated until it becomes a habitude the concrete experience is accumulated for the understanding of the principles concerned. It is through action and that for the most part unconscious and habitual that the child lives himself into the moral economy of the school. The skill of the teacher appears in making this process a natural and as far as possible an agreeable one. Professor Sharp thus comments upon the educative effect of the Francis W. Parker school of Chicago:

"The pupil has before him constantly a living model of a well-ordered community. It is a community whose members co-operate freely and gladly without any calculation of the exact balance between give and take. This model is not merely a picture he looks upon from without, it is rather a life which embraces his own, whose nature he feels because he is a part of it and it is in a very real sense a part of him. A craving for harmony of purpose, a desire to live in unity with one's fellows, to breathe an atmosphere of mutual confidence and good will, are the normal outcomes of such an experience. In the more favorable instances this will mean an impression which continues and determines ideals and conduct through life." [1]

It is often imagined by educators that the sheer routine of the school life when ordered and smooth will insure training in character. For does it not entail punctuality, neatness, truthfulness, accuracy, and a host of other virtues? But the so-called school virtues are in and of themselves no more valuable than other virtues of the office, the mill, or the department store. So long as the horizon from which the school virtues are measured is the four walls of the school they will have little social significance. For true morality requires the whole point of view. That is to say, these routine virtues, that might be called the indispensable moral minimum to the existence of the school's life, must be integrated in some way with the larger social situation. They must be vitalized by some sort of intelligent relation to the community. Here is the necessary point of contact between school and social conscience. They stand in mutual need of each other. The school needs the inspiration and power gained through contact with the moral sentiment of the community. The social conscience needs the school for enlightenment, criticism, and above all as the instrument for the training of efficient citizenship.

In some schools the attempt has been made to secure direct training for citizenship by enlisting high school students in movements for the civic betterment of their own

[1] *Education for Chracter*, p. 105.

communities. A most interesting experiment of this sort is the high school of Two Rivers, Michigan, in which a "flaccid debating society" was transformed into a Young Men's Civic Club, including practically all male high school students. This club was instrumental in renovating the cemetery, establishing public bath houses, and creating a park. Of the moral effect of this upon these students and community, Professor Sharp says, "This makes not merely for municipal and national patriotism. It makes, or at least tends to make, for trustworthiness and good will as between man and man, and indeed all the feelings which knit men together and give them a sense of solidarity. If this work is continued its cumulative effect upon the life, especially the moral life, of that little city will in the end be tremendous. Of all the agencies for moral training thus far described this seems to me by far the most effective." [1]

§ 9. Moral Thoughtfulness

In the college and the university and to a certain extent also in the high school moral instruction and criticism become of equal importance with moral training and personal influence. The fundamental ethical attitudes of the average college student have been formed. It is now rather a question of subjecting accepted norms to critical examination. The problems of the moral life must be approached consciously and reflectively. Earlier habits will serve to keep the character balanced while ethical sanctions are under the fire of criticism. Furthermore, the academic aloofness of the college student and the absence of immediate necessity of taking part in the social issues give leisure for reflection and for the reformulation of ideals if necessary. The constant emphasis by writers on education of the school as part of the social order and of school life as the actual process of living one's self "into citizenship" must be materially modified, therefore, with regard to college and university. More often the college career is a process of living one's self out of old conven-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 137 f.

tional ways of life. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the school can ever rival the family and the church as agencies for moral training. They are natural while the school is artificial. The school's chief rôle lies in the clarification of intelligence. The church and the family will ever remain society's chosen agencies for cultivating religious and moral attitudes.

The end sought in moral instruction in college and university should be a mature moral thoughtfulness which implies the habit of subjecting to critical analysis all ethical questions. As a result of such critical analysis the second characteristic of moral thoughtfulness will be attained, namely, reasoned conviction. By far the larger parts of our beliefs on the great issues of life are matters of convention or parts of the social heritage taken over uncritically from the community. The relation to our lives, therefore, of this social heritage, in so far as we absorb it uncritically, must necessarily be somewhat arbitrary and accidental. These sanctions do not become parts of our lives in any thoroughgoing and intelligent fashion until they have been made matters of reasoned conviction.

A not unimportant result of moral thoughtfulness is that through it we get the moral perspective and the whole point of view. The note of relativity is writ large over the moral life of the modern American. This relativity is the inevitable accompaniment of the intensely pragmatic and factual character of our national life. The average American, says Mr. Rodrigues in his brilliant analysis of American life, *The People of Action,* has no thought-out philosophy of life. He lives for and through action. His ideals are not arrived at in the quiet of reflection and meditation. They are struck out, like sparks, white hot from the forge of action. Hence the elements of relativity, of adventitiousness that are so conspicuous in American society. In everything there is a large element of the accidental, in the plan of our city streets, in the architecture of our homes, in our educational systems, in business or politics or national policies. Nothing is perhaps so needed in the make up of the social conscience of the average American community as habits of reflection. As

a nation we have yet to recognize the moral obligation of being intelligent, that is to say, of seeing life steadily and seeing it whole.

The scholar and the higher institutions of learning have been for generations society's chosen instruments for enlightening the sentiments of men. The rôle of science in rationalizing and liberalizing the social conscience is simply incalculable. The social dialectic through which revolutionary ideas such as the helio-centric astronomy of Galileo or the thesis of Darwin have gradually become embodied in the thought and life of the average man is not the least interesting phase of the advance of human thought. Viewed pragmatically this social dialectic seems to be largely a struggle between ideas, the "logical duels" made so much of by Tarde, those ideas finally surviving that best meet the need for intellectual and social harmony. A more intensive analysis perhaps will show that what we have is a constant interplay between the innovations or particularizations of great minds and the slow process of generalizing or testing out these ideas by the masses of men. Moral progress thus becomes the resultant of the individual as a particularizing force and of society as a generalizing force. The variations or new points of departure are provided by the genius while the test of the truth and value of these new ideas is found in the ability of the average man to make them part and parcel of his daily way of life.[1]

§ 10. Academic Freedom

The question may be asked, however, what is to safeguard college and university in the exercise of their function as cultivators of moral thoughtfulness? This brings us face to face with the question of academic freedom. Academic freedom has three phases, first the right of the school as society's expert agent to determine the nature and scope of education, secondly

[1] Accounts of the effect of science upon the sentiments of men have been given by Lecky, *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*; A. D. White, *The History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*; Bury, *History of the Freedom of Thought*; and Benn, *History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*.

the right of free and unrestricted search for the truth, and thirdly the right to proclaim that truth. Freedom of policy, freedom of investigation and freedom of teaching are all but phases of the larger problem of the relation of the institution of higher learning to the community it serves.

Freedom of investigation was opposed from the very rise of the great European universities. All sorts of compromises were attempted such as restricting discoveries to the purely academic sphere and forbidding their practical applications. In the days of Galileo and Bacon it was not uncommon, for example, to hold that what was true for science or philosophy was not true for theology. More recently it is not unheard of to find the principle of evolution in denominational schools admitted in biology or geology but tabooed in psychology or the history of religion. With the growing emphasis in a democracy upon the spread of knowledge and the belief that increased efficiency in business or otherwise is a matter of the application of scientific principles to practical problems, all restrictions upon freedom of investigation tend to disappear.

The cases of academic freedom that attract public attention turn almost without exception upon the question of freedom of teaching rather than freedom of investigation. It would appear strange that after admitting freedom of investigation there should be opposition to freedom of teaching. For the freedom to discover the truth is meaningless without freedom to communicate it to others. But freedom of teaching raises many practical problems. It has been contended, for example, that the sudden communication of new truth to the masses often has a revolutionary effect. The stability of the social order and the preservation of the forms of civilization, it is argued, are after all of more immediate practical value than the abstract truth. This argument influenced even as great a thinker as Descartes and made him withhold some of his writings from publication.

Freedom of teaching is sometimes opposed also on the ground that it is inimical to the practical needs of daily life. The average man or woman must have a certain body of

loyalties that are accepted unquestioningly if the duties of daily life are to be met. It is with fear and trembling therefore that many parents entrust their boys and girls to the tender mercies of the college instructor. His insistence upon *akademische Lehrfreiheit und Lernfreiheit* is not understood and is therefore suspected. His critical attitude towards conventional ethics or orthodox theology seems a useless and cruel disturbance of the highest and holiest loyalties. The average man or woman following the prosaic round of daily life feels no imperative obligation to submit ultimate spiritual or moral loyalties to a searching examination. To criticize when action is constantly necessary is to paralyze life at its source. The practical problem of proclaiming the truth after it has been discovered must of course be solved in the interest of a progressive social order. It is ultimately a question of developing habits of reflection and of poise in the community so that the truth can be proclaimed as soon as discovered and that without disrupting the social order. When once the habit of moral thoughtfulness has become general among a people new truth or radical discoveries are disarmed of their revolutionary effects. Reason is the best safeguard against the radicalism of reason.

The question of academic freedom and of the ability of the scholar to shape the social conscience of the future is ultimately a question of the status of the teaching profession. To a very large element of the American public the university instructor has no status worth the name. He is considered a member of an institution the policy of which he does not shape and towards which he sustains the relation of a hireling. Outside the pale of some of our oldest institutions the scholar's position in this country is hardly ideal.

The problem of securing to the teacher freedom and an assured and respected place in American democracy is beset with difficulties. To ensure the efficient exercise of the rôle of investigator and *censor morum* there must exist a measure of that social poise that comes with a self-conscious social order and the accumulation of cultural traditions. American

democracy has as yet very little of either. We have been so preoccupied with the creation of the material basis of civilization that we have had little time or inclination for culture or critical reflection. It is to be feared the applause that greets the Rev. " Billy " Sunday's characterization of the university scholar as " an intellectual feather duster " is not without its social significance.

This does not mean that the sympathies of the American public are not on the side of the victim when some academic *auto-da-fé* occurs. As a rule they are. But these sympathies are such as are naturally extended to one engaged in a struggle where the odds are against him. They may even be prompted by a vague sense of justice which the average uninformed individual feels somehow has been violated. The sympathies of the masses in such cases do not center around any clear-cut notions of the rights of the individual or of the interests he represents. The very indefiniteness of the scholar's status makes it hard to grasp the ideals for which he contends. Hence the public sentiment aroused in his behalf is dissipated because of the lack of interpretation and rational direction. This is inevitable so long as the issues involved are at the mercy of the well-meaning but uninformed impulses of the community at large. Public sentiment can not be trusted to make sharp distinctions or to follow with patience and understanding questions that demand detailed or theoretical knowledge. The public must do its thinking *en bloc*. Public opinion, therefore, in order to be effective must to a very large extent be institutionalized. It must find expression through chosen groups or professions. These groups must themselves have self-determining power in the process of shaping the ideals and solving the problems of the community.

The problem of academic freedom is, then, one of establishing a recognized status for the profession of the teacher. Such a status involves well-defined rights and duties, which the profession itself must determine in its own interest and in the interest of the community it serves. It involves also an intelligent understanding by the community of what those

rights and duties are and of their significance for the community itself; in a democracy, of course, rights have validity directly in proportion to the extent to which they are understood and sanctioned by the community.

We arrive, therefore, at a somewhat paradoxical conclusion, namely, that there can be no real academic freedom except where that freedom is protected by the state. An enlightened democracy must freely and generously extend to its schools and its scholars not only the right to discover the truth and to proclaim it freely but also the right to determine what phases of truth shall be taught and how. Academic freedom, in other words, is but another phase of the problem of expert control, through which alone democracy can hope to solve its complex problems.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE ETHICS OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

§ 1. The Nature of the Right of Private Property

A right is simply a way of acting, of developing capacities or of exercising functions, that is sanctioned by the moral sentiment of the community. The basis of all rights, therefore, including that of private property, is found in the constraining sense of well-being that is common to all the members of the group among whom the right is exercised. The distinction of "mine" and "thine" depends not so much upon occupation as upon a feeling of common interest that is furthered and made articulate by this distinction. The idea of property in so far as it has any ethical element, therefore, and is not measured in terms of the good old rule that he shall take who has the power and he shall keep who can, presupposes this feeling of common interest. Society assures to each of its members in the right of private property the power to secure and exercise the means necessary for the expansion of personality and the development of capacity as moral creatures. The general will that provides the sanction for the right must also determine the scope and purpose of the right. It must be exercised in the interest of the social good.

The fact that property is primarily a social trust conditions fundamentally the ethical implications of property. For to exercise the right of property as a social trust forces the individual to reflect upon the bearing of its exercise upon the welfare of the community as a whole. There arises a constant need for correlating the laws that govern the right of property and the human values it is designed to serve. The control of the time, the talents and the persons of others that goes with the right of property must

then be exercised not from the narrow and selfish point of view of the individual's own immediate interests but with an eye to the interests of that larger social complex of which the property owner and his employees are constituent elements. It is only through a keen sensitiveness to the social values always associated with the right of property that the institution can ever play the rôle it should play as society's chosen instrument for the discipline and development of character.

The institution of private property must be emancipated from the moribund legal abstractions of the eighteenth century. It must cease to be a dead juridical entity and serve the needs of a progressive society, and that without surrendering its economic or ethical value. It is doubtless true that much of the opposition to the institution of private property in the past and much of the criticism of the present rest upon outworn ideas of its character. There is no surer way in which to discredit private property than to seek its justification in eighteenth century philosophy or even in the arbitrary deliverances of courts and the rubrics of the law. These are only of value in so far as they enjoy the moral sanction of the community. Where laws, whether dealing with property or otherwise, do not have this sanction of the enlightened conscience of the community, they are already in process of abrogation. The radical easily finds support for his attack upon the right of private property in the gap that has arisen between the institution as it actually exists and the demands of the enlightened social conscience as to what it should be. To widen that gap or to refuse to bridge it is to play into the hands of the radical.

The real safeguard of private property, therefore, is not to be found in the provisions of the Constitution nor in the judicial interpretations of that great document by learned judges, but in a sane and intelligent adaptation of the institution to the needs of the community. The real menace to private property arises from an arbitrary and unintelligent use of it contrary to the demands of society as a whole. The problem of

the reformer and of the constructive statesman so far as private property is concerned is the problem of instilling into the moral sentiment of the community firm and enlightened convictions as to the essentially social nature of property and the fundamental necessity of maintaining and utilizing it as an instrument for liberating the energies of men and assuring a contented, well-balanced and progressive national life.

§ 2. Position of Private Property in American Life:

The various ways in which the institution of private property has molded the moral sentiments of the American people are all but innumerable. In the life of no other free people has the institution had such far-reaching influence. The antecedents of our ethic of private property are partly religious, the result of the influence of the principles of the Protestant Reformation upon the economic liberalism of Puritan England. They are partly philosophical and legal. The doctrine of property as a natural right, championed by John Locke and finding its way into the constitutions and bills of rights of the various states, is now part of the organic law of the nation. The courts through the exercise of their unique position of power as interpreters of the law have handed down decisions that still further strengthened this doctrine of private property. Finally the great emphasis placed upon economic self-assertion and unrestricted business freedom when Americans were laying the bases of material greatness during the last century strengthened still further the position of private property. We have little or no evidence that the institution is losing its hold upon the American people. "From 1750 to 1850", writes Ely, "there was a general tendency on the part of private property to become more extensive and also more intensive. During the last thirty or forty years it is possible that private property has become rather less extensive, but it is not certain that it has on the whole lost anything in intensity, having now lost and now gained." [1]

[1] *Property and Contract in their Relations to the Distribution of Wealth*, I, p. 60.

§ 3. Private Property and Religious Traditions

The aim of the English dissenters of the seventeenth century was, primarily, religious and political liberty. They drew their inspiration from the great liberalizing doctrines of the Reformation, free grace and justification by faith. But the fines placed upon the dissenters by Land and the Court of High Commission, the many other economic handicaps suffered because of their faith and finally the struggle against the monopolies under the Stuarts forced them to include in the fight for freedom the economic as well as the religious and political spheres. With the triumph of the Puritans England became a "nation of shopkeepers." The large capitalists of the earlier part of the century, the founders of colonies and the business favorites of the crown were now superseded by numerous though moderate capitalists of the middle class who laid the basis for the modern capitalistic order. From them to a large extent have come our ideas of private property.

We have indicated in earlier chapters how the religious incentive to the careful and conscientious exercise of the right of private property as a God-given stewardship assured a more or less social attitude since the glory of God was usually identified with the common weal. But with the decline of religious sanction, that can be traced in England towards the close of the eighteenth and in America during the early part of the nineteenth century, this lofty background of moral responsibility gradually faded out into the light of the common day. Unfortunately there was little possibility of compromise between the noble ethic of property preached by Richard Baxter and the thoroughly secularized and even materialistic conception of property that became dominant with the growth of capitalism and the triumph of the industrial revolution. In the place of this theistic ethic of property there arose an ethic of property based upon a militant pecuniary individualism that feared not God and had small regard for the man who was not able to maintain his rights in a competitive order.

Here we must seek the explanation, in part at least, of the anti-social note that has often characterized the large property-holding group. For this group has drawn its ideas as to property from the great bourgeois middle class capitalists of the England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with their emphasis of unrestricted competition and the traditions of a vigorous individualism that felt itself responsible not to the community but to God. The anti-social and materialistic note of the modern property-holder, particularly of the capitalistic group, is due, in part at least, to the loss of these earlier religious sanctions. Hence property as an institution has become impersonal, even anti-social with "its assuredness of purpose, its matter-of-factness, its economic concentration, its hatred of bureaucratic leading-strings and interference from above, its purely economic exploitation of the individual, and its unemotional standpoint towards all the problems of life, and especially towards social reforms".[1]

§ 4. Private Property as a Natural Right

The doctrine of private property as a natural right has found its way directly or indirectly into almost every bill of rights and state constitution of the nation, thanks to the prevalent political philosophy of a century and more ago. It was even appealed to in support of the institution of slavery. The constitution of the state of Kentucky of 1850 contains this curious statement: "The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanctions; and the right of the owner of a slave to such a slave, and its increase, is the same, and as inviolable as the right of the owner of any property whatever". There is no better illustration of the inherent contradictions in this doctrine of natural rights than the fact that Charles Sumner also made use of it with telling effect in his philippics in the United States Senate against the slave-power.

The doctrine of natural rights has exercised a profound influence upon our conceptions of private property. In its most modern form it insists that property is indispensable to

[1] Levy, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

man's individual development and the attainment of liberty. Without the dominion over things he is a slave. It is in the free creative expression of his powers that man achieves personality and freedom. Property is but the external form of this inherent and necessary law of human nature. Hence property is a natural right independent of the laws and institutions of men. This same hoary doctrine of natural rights underlies much of the thinking of to-day. It is at the basis of the reasoning of a book that has exercised a profound influence upon the minds of many in regard to the right of property in land, namely, *Progress and Poverty* by Henry George. For a brilliant criticism of this book and incidentally the application of the *reductio ad absurdum* argument to the doctrine of natural rights we are indebted to Huxley.[1]

§ 5. Private Property and the Constitution

While the doctrine of property as a natural right is not distinctly enunciated in the Constitution yet, as Professor Beard has shown, that famous historical instrument is to all intents and purposes an economic document. It was economic not in the sense of aiming primarily at the protection of property interests but because the men who formulated its principles, especially Madison and Hamilton, realized that only through the support of the property interests could national unity be attained. Hamilton especially saw that it was only possible to offset the decentralizing influence of the states and to create an adequate central government by securing the loyal support of the various property interests. He had, therefore, no illusions as to the end the Constitution sought. It was an attempt to organize these more or less inchoate property interests and to consolidate them in support of national unity, and in this he succeeded. If thereby he was forced to give to private property a place of power and of privilege which was destined a century later to offer serious difficulties in the way of the growth of a socialized and industrialized democracy, this was

[1] "Natural and Political Rights," *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 28, pp. 174 f.

nothing more than the price that had to be paid in the perilous days of 1787 for the attainment of national unity and the preservation of the ideals of freedom that inspired the war for independence.

The conservative attitude of the property-holding group is reflected in the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution, "No person . . . shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation". By a curious turn of fortune, a later famous Amendment, the Fourteenth, designed to be the Magna Charta of the emancipated negro, became the bulwark of private property under the form of great inter-state corporations against the legislative restrictions of the various states. This Amendment made it possible to challenge all such legislation on the ground that it violated the constitutional regulation, "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law".

The "almost impregnable constitutional position", which, according to President Hadley, private property has come to occupy in this country, has been strengthened by the rôle played by the courts. The famous system of "checks and balances" introduced by the founders of the nation to prevent usurpation of power by any one branch of the government has resulted in making the courts, and especially the Supreme Court, the final arbiter of disputes and the guardian of the rights of minorities and of individuals. The status of private property depends in the last analysis upon the decisions of the judges who sit upon the supreme bench. They are not free to interpret the rights of property in terms of a social or economic philosophy derived from the needs of the given stage of economic evolution. They must decide whether a given law affecting property rights is in harmony with the idea of property that has been laid down in the organic law of the land, namely, the Constitution. That is, they are forced to abide

by a conception of private property that is derived from the prevailing philosophy of over a century ago. Much of the criticism that is levelled against the courts and even against the Supreme Court fails to take into account that it is this earlier individualistic conception of the right of property, firmly embedded in our legal traditions, rather than any prejudice of the courts in favor of property interests that influences their decisions.

It is not surprising, then, that in its decisions the Supreme Court has tended to strengthen the "almost impregnable constitutional position" of property in this country. Chief Justice Marshall handed down in the famous Dartmouth College case of 1819 a decision the tendency of which was to regard a charter as a contract that was to all intents and purposes inviolable. There has been a tendency, to be sure, on the part of the Supreme Court to break away in its later decisions from the precedent laid down in this case. But it is not difficult to trace back to the influence of this decision the legislative difficulties experienced in changing or abrogating franchise rights, especially in the case of public utility corporations.

In 1882 a case appealed to the Supreme Court from California under the clause of the Fourteenth Amendment that forbids the depriving of a person of property "without due process of law" a decision was handed down that fixed the status of a corporation as a legal person with all the rights and immunities of a natural person. In the light of these facts President Hadley makes this rather interesting statement: "The fact is that private property in the United States, in spite of all the dangers of unintelligent legislation, is constitutionally in a stronger position, as against the Government and the Government authority, than is the case in any country of Europe. However much public feeling may at times move in the direction of socialistic measures, there is no nation which by its constitution is so far removed from socialism or from a socialistic order. This is partly because the governmental means provided for the control or limitation of private property are weaker in America than

elsewhere, but chiefly because the rights of private property are more formally established in the Constitution itself ".

§ 6. Private Property and Industrial Development

The hold of the institution of private property upon American life has been still further intensified through unparalleled industrial development. At the beginning of the last century the immediate problem before the American people was that of laying broad and secure the economic basis for a civilization. This task was made all the easier by a Constitution that placed the rights of private property in an impregnable position and by the freedom of personal initiative encouraged by federal as well as local governments. All classes were thus stimulated to devote their powers to economic achievement. Wealth became to a very large extent the sign of progress, the measure of social values. Private property was the badge of social worth, the key to political power and social prestige. The result was the creation of what is perhaps the most striking phase of the institution of private property in this country, our American plutocracy. This group has been defined as " a more or less fluctuating group of very wealthy men, loosely united (primarily by pecuniary bonds) who, through their wealth and prestige, and through the allegiance of like-minded but poorer men, exert an enormous, if not preponderating, influence over industry, politics, and public opinion ".

The disciplinary effect of the institution of private property, as represented by the triumphant plutocracy of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, upon the thought and life of the average American can scarcely be exaggerated. Through a marvellous system of industrial organization they not only dominated the economic life of the nation but for a while they even dictated its political policies. The ideals, traditions, habits of life of this group permeated every phase of American society. Its standard of ethics was acknowledged by the millions of small property-holders whose economic existence depended upon the will of some financial magnate. Even

the propertyless class, including the skilled and unskilled worker, approached all economic problems from the point of view of the regnant plutocracy. This has been pointed out in brilliant fashion by Veblen in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*.

It would be a mistake to suppose that property has ever completely dominated the social conscience of the American people. To a large extent the institution of property has served the ends of democracy. It has liberated the capacities of men who with infinite toil developed the natural resources of a continent and laid the material basis for a new civilization. In this free, creative self-expression, in this mastery over nature men also achieved a spirit of sturdy independence and a love of liberty that are among the most precious traditions of America. But the general tendency was to make of property more an end than a means.

The entrenched position of property in American life has not been without its evil effects. Where legal traditions tend to view property as an inalienable and unalterable right the inevitable tendency is to neglect the social side of property. The individual is taught to look upon the right of property as absolute—*dominium est jus utendi et abutendi re,* to use the phrase of Roman law. The ethic of the dealer who destroys food supplies to keep up the price rests upon the assumption that the right of property includes not only the power to use but to waste, to dispose of absolutely. A generation or so ago, when the resources of the country seemed unlimited and the utmost freedom of individual endeavor was encouraged, the weakness of such an ethic was not felt. To-day in a highly mutualized order, with disappearing natural resources and increased human needs, the responsibilities of the property-owner are fast undergoing an ethical transformation.

§ 7. Private Property and Social Stratification

The traditional ethic of private property as a right that is unalterable and inalienable and hence absolute, has implica-

tions of the utmost importance for the relations of men to each other in our complicated modern industrial order. In every office, shop, store or mill we see certain individuals giving orders and others obeying these orders. If we ask ourselves what is the basis of this authority by which one man or a group of men dispose of the time, physical and mental energy of thousands of their fellowmen almost at will, we can hardly say that the law compels this obedience. They are not beasts of burden nor human chattels; legally they are the free citizens of a democracy. Wherein, then, does this authority lie? The seat of this authority is undoubtedly to be found in the right of private property. The state gives to the owner of property power over the lives and activities of his fellows, not in order that they may be selfishly and injuriously exploited but on the supposition that in the long run this is the best way in which to develop natural resources, create economic goods, provide employment for men and further the welfare of society. That is, this power over others by virtue of the possession of property is a social trust and is safeguarded only on the supposition that it is exercised as such.

Unfortunately the doctrine of property as an absolute right does not conduce to the social exercise of the vast power it gives. Where this sense of social responsibility is lacking the results are often unfortunate. "It creates the master and servant, employer and employee, vested interest, and landless proletariat relationship—a situation in which submission is at present essential to the earning of a livelihood. With absolutism of control in the ordinary non-union large-scale shop corporations have been able to rely upon the meekness of disposition among workers to 'get away with' the rules imposed and disciplinary methods used. When we recall that the management hires, promotes, discharges, demotes, decides hours and wages without interference whenever it can, we may realize that the 'Nemesis of Docility' is at hand. And what makes matters worse is that submission on one hand fosters domination on the other until

a theory has developed and is openly supported by many employers that a benevolent but firm despotism is the secret of successful factory management. And as a temporary expedient the theory is unfortunately all too true. The rub comes . . . when the workers have been cared for long enough to store up energy and be filled with disgust at paternalism ".[1]

The attempt has been made to sketch in somewhat biting phrases the outline of a new feudalism suggested by this absolute ethic of private property. " It is a feudalism ", we are told, " somewhat graced by a sense of ethics and somewhat restrained by a fear of democracy. The new barons seek a public sanction through conspicuous giving, and they avoid a too obvious exercise of their power upon political institutions. Their beneficence, however, though large, is rarely prodigal. It betokens, as in the case of the careful spouse of John Gilpin, a frugal mind. They demand the full terms nominated in the bond; they exact from the traffic all that it will bear. . . . They are never given, even by accident, to any of the movements making for the correction of what reformers term injustice. But not to look too curiously into motives, our new Feudalism is at least considerate. It is a paternal, a Benevolent Feudalism ".[2]

It is not difficult to point out where this writer, like all of his class, exaggerates for the sake of literary and dramatic effect. On the whole, however, he has set forth in striking fashion a phase, and we trust a passing phase, of the disciplinary effect of the traditional ethic of private property upon the minds of men, especially among large property-holders. There is evidence also that it is not wholly without a basis of fact. In a letter of July 17, 1902, Mr. George F. Baer, President of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, used the following language: " I beg of you not to be discouraged. The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for—not by labor agitators, but by

[1] Ordway Tead, *Instincts in Industry*, p. 125.
[2] W. J. Ghent, *Our Benevolent Feudalism*, pp. 9, 10.

the Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given the control of the property interests of the country, and upon the successful management of which so much depends ".

§ 8. Tendency to Identify Property with Ownership

As a result of its highly institutionalized position in American life, property has tended to become a static rather than a dynamic thing. Property exists to be owned; its significance is largely exhausted in the relation of ownership. It seldom occurs to the man on the street that a piece of valuable unimproved property in the heart of the city is any less property because it serves no creative purpose. Its status as property is fixed by the legal relation it sustains to some owner, not in the extent to which it liberates human activities or enriches the community life. Even institutions such as churches and universities, dealing with the intangible intellectual and spiritual values, must be owned by trustees before they can have institutional reality. Ownership is the measure of existence.

The idea of ownership as constituting the essence of property may be pushed to such an extreme that it becomes downright anti-social in spirit and intent. Property is that which is essentially private. It is my own just to the extent to which I succeed in keeping its use from being shared by others. This is the implication of the sign one often meets on unoccupied and unimproved property, " Private property, no thoroughfare ". This thrusts into one's face, as the very essence of the right of private property, that it is exclusive, selfish, and antagonistic to all that is social or shared in common. It is this narrow spirit that stirs the opponent of private property and makes him see in it the avowed enemy of the community.

An implication of an ethic of private property that stresses ownership is that what cannot be owned is worthless, unreal, negligible. The permanent values are associated with those things that can be bartered for, subjected to fixed legal relations of ownership. Now it so happens that the most precious possessions of the race are just those that cannot be

owned in the legal business sense. The poetry of Homer, the philosophy of Plato, the great Gothic cathedrals, the masterpieces of Shakespeare, Goethe or Molière, the creations of Bach and Beethoven belong to the race. Who would be so ridiculous as to talk of sustaining relations of legal ownership to the religious ideas of Jesus or John Wesley? There is no such thing as a monopoly of ownership in the highest and best things. In fact, we can only enjoy them by sharing them. Our glorification of ownership must be content with the cruder and coarser goods of life. We may have a trust in oil, hardly a trust in religion, science or art.

The scale of values created by the ethic of ownership tends to take precedence over the intangible higher values to which we do homage in our better moments. Only slowly did rights dealing with intellectual property find formulation in laws governing plagiarism, copyright, and the like. With the average man it is still a much more serious offense to filch a man's pocketbook than to filch his ideas. How little those subtle spiritual rights associated with academic freedom appeal to the average man! The strength of the scientific conscience of the scholar or investigator cannot be reduced to dollars and cents and hence it is a negligible matter.

There are other rights such as the right to be well-born, the right to civic cleanliness recognized by ancient Rome, the right to a minimum wage or to an assured income among those classes whose economic margin is small, that have been discouragingly slow in gaining a place in the social conscience. The reason is not far to seek. The discipline of the ethic of private property has dulled the sensibilities of men to these things. The right to work (*droit du travail*) or the right to sell one's labor in the best market harmonizes with the ethic of property; the right to work (*droit au travail*) or the right to steady employment conflicts with the ethic of property and has been opposed. The right of the child to live its life gladly, freely, and healthfully is a remote and intangible good as compared with the time-honored and legally entrenched property rights of the mill-owner that are restricted by child labor

legislation. The large property owner is asked to substitute for the immediate tangible goods of profits on investment the intangible human values of a more enlightened and efficient citizenship. These things, however, do not have a market value. They belong to the "imponderables" that cannot be owned, bought, sold. For similar reasons municipal regulations that look to cleaner streets, decent tenements, efficient car service, though of acknowledged importance, are distressingly slow of attainment because they are opposed by a social conscience that thinks in terms of the ethic of private property.

The pressure of the ethic of ownership is producing some interesting alignments among social groups. It is aligning the average enlightened propertyless citizen with his vote against the property owner with his constitutional safeguards for property. This alignment has not been consciously made for the most part because the average propertyless American is not opposed to the institution of private property. He is not ready to say of private property, as Voltaire and the forerunners of the French Revolution said of the church, *écraser l'infâme*. But all who are struggling for a more progressive democracy have been forced inevitably into the group opposed to the privileged position of private property. The average man often finds that his legitimate efforts after a richer expansion of his powers, his worthy desire for a social order in which a larger number of men and women can enter fully and intensively into the enjoyment of those things that make for a better world, is checked by private property. He then begins to wonder whether we have not reached a stage of social evolution in which the demands made upon property are no longer fully met by the traditional ideas. The highly favored position held by private property in American institutions serves only to make men all the more sensitive to its failure to adjust itself to the demands of a new day. The stubborn and in the main the successful resistance private property has offered to this rising tide of democracy has affected the development of the social conscience itself.

It has forced men to find the satisfaction of their democratic needs along lines least antagonistic to private property, such as the extension of the suffrage, the spread of public education, the alleviation of suffering through philanthropy, and the democratizing of art. Any move looking towards industrial democracy has met with stubborn opposition owing to the prevailing ethic of private property.

§ 9. Instrumentalities for Socializing Private Property.

The method of procedure of the acquisitive instinct underlying ownership is entirely logical, though it may seem harsh, materialistic and blind to the other nobler creative impulses of the human heart. It seeks to acquire what is its due and to retain what is not its due, for the principle of acquisition works in one direction only. To yield to the demands of social justice or to gratify the more socially valuable creative impulses would decrease owning power. In this ethic whatever makes for possession is good and whatever militates against possession is evil. There are no sentimental illusions, no waste of time and energy, no idealistic dreams. If we quarrel with such an ethic we should remember that it is not inherent in the nature of the institution of private property which is intrinsically neither good nor bad. Our quarrel should be with the social situation, the traditions and habits of thought that make such an ethic of property possible. The problem is really one of creating a new social conscience inspired by a deeper insight into the meaning of property itself, a conscience which realizes that private property is a social trust. The question arises, how is this to be done without a radical departure from American traditions? To this query the natural reply is that we have a remedy ready at hand, namely, taxation.

The ethical justification of taxation lies in the fact society realizes that all the social instrumentalities for progress, such as health regulations, welfare bureaus, scientific school systems, are most important factors in the creation of the wealth of the community. There is a very real sense in which

the building of streets, the improvement of car service, the providing of good water, the safeguarding of child life, and even those more intangible movements for the Americanization of the immigrant or the cultivation of civic spirit actually add to the value of the private property of individuals who are often indifferent, sometimes antagonistic to these things. The community that assures through its schools and health department a body of strong, intelligent, and contented laborers for the mill-operator has actually contributed no small factor to his wealth-producing facilities, for which there is no specific return except in taxes.

If we take the broad social point of view as to the origin and nature of property suggested by the ethics of taxation, we must question the absolute right of private property as over against the rights of the community. These rights, together with all others, originate in the state, and to the state and community they must look for their sanction. The community with its vast complex of institutions provides the individual with many varied instrumentalities for the development of his powers, one among them being the right of private property. Because the community makes possible these forms of individual achievement it demands the right to regulate the affairs of the individual in the prosecution of his ends. It can determine the methods by which wealth is accumulated and it can also direct how that wealth shall be expended where such expenditure is of vital concern for the welfare of the community.

There is another striking illustration of the social nature of property in the right of eminent domain. This has been defined by the Supreme Court as "the ultimate right of the sovereign power to appropriate, not only the public property, but the private property of all citizens within the territorial sovereignty, to public uses."[1] This fundamental right of society in the land is probably to be traced back to an earlier undifferentiated stage when all land was held in common. We have no reason to believe that this right

[1] Charles River Bridge *v.* Warren Bridge, 11 Peters, 420 (1837).

has been repudiated or could be neglected by society without endangering its vital interests. This fact has also been cogently stated by another judge of the Supreme Court. "No society has ever admitted that it could not sacrifice individual welfare to its own existence. If conscripts are necessary for its army, it seizes them, and marches them, with bayonets in their rear, to death. It runs highways and railways through old family places in spite of the owner's protest, paying in this instance the market value, to be sure, because no civilized government sacrifices the individual more than it can help, but still sacrifices his will and his welfare to that of the rest".[1]

Perhaps the best illustration of the social character of property is to be found in the attempts to regulate property rights through an appeal to the police power. This vague term means primarily the right of the community to secure order, suppress crime and violence, and protect life and property. This cruder and more obvious sense was gradually expanded so that the police power now includes not only the right of the state to prevent crime and violence but also the right to take the more positive measures that have to do with the health, happiness, economic welfare, and enlightenment of its citizens. In some states, as in modern Germany, the police power has absorbed almost the entire life of the community, political, economic, and even cultural. That this power is of recognized importance even in our individualistic social order has been recognized by the courts. In the famous Slaughter House Cases (1872), the Supreme Court made the following deliverance: "The power (police power) is, and must be, from its very nature, incapable of any very exact definition or limitation. Upon it depends the security of the social order, the life and health of the citizen, the comfort of an existence in a thickly populated community, the enjoyment of private and social life, and the beneficial use of property".

It would appear, then, that the use of the police power in

[1] Holmes, *The Common Law*, p. 43.

the regulation of property rights is nothing more nor less than a concrete application of a principle fundamental to the spirit of American law. This principle is that all property is acquired, and the right to its enjoyment and use is guaranteed, on the assumption that this right conduces to the general welfare of the community and does not injure or invalidate the rights of others. More important still, however, for the social nature of the institution of property is the fact that of recent years the courts have advanced from the more or less negative exercise of the police power to a more positive and constructive interpretation. In 1907 the Supreme Court made this rather remarkable statement in regard to a case that had been decided the year before: "In that case we rejected the view that the police power cannot be exercised for the general well-being of the community. That power, we said, embraces regulations designed to promote the public health, the public morals, or the public safety . . . (the power of the state) is not confined, as we said, to the suppression of what is offensive, disorderly, or unsanitary. It extends to so dealing with the conditions that exist in the state as to bring out of them the greatest welfare of the people. This is the principle of the cases we have cited".[1]

It is possible, then, to define the police power with reference to property rights as the power of the lawmakers, and ultimately of the courts as the interpreters of the law, to define and restrict the right of property from time to time as it may become necessary to meet the needs of an ever changing social order. An examination of the cases where the police power has been used will show that those which have attracted public attention and have proven to be of the most vital interest to the nation at large are those dealing with the regulation of private property. Indeed Professor Ely has defined the police power as "the power of the courts to interpret the concept property, and above all, private property; and to establish its metes and bounds". Certainly there are few things more interesting in

[1] Bacon *v.* Walker, 204, U. S., 311, 317, 318. The earlier case cited was C. B. & Q. R. R. Co. *v.* Drainage Com., 200 U. S. 561, 562 (1906).

the history of the industrial life of the nation than the effective way in which this vague and yet powerful principle of police power has been used and is destined to be used even more extensively in socializing and democratizing the institution of private property. It bids fair in time to dislodge private property from its "impregnable constitutional position."

When we push our analysis beyond the rather vague term, police power, which in reality the courts have never succeeded in defining and from the nature of the principle itself can never place in the logical straitjacket of a final definition, we get into a sphere where social psychology and social ethics must come to our aid. We discover that in its last analysis the police power draws its strength and divines its purpose from that fundamental organization of the sentiments of the community that we have labeled the social conscience. This is intimated by one of the most socially minded members of the supreme bench, Mr. Justice Holmes, as follows: "The police power extends to all the great public needs. It may be put forth in aid of what is sanctioned by usage, or held by the prevailing morality or the strong and preponderant opinion to be greatly and immediately necessary to the public welfare".[1] This is a clear recognition of the rôle of the social conscience in directing the police power and providing it with an ultimate sanction. It is to this court of last appeal in the enlightened sentiments of a free people, sentiments, to be sure, that change from age to age with the shifting stresses and strains of the social order, that we must look for the determination of the right of private property. If the time should ever come when the prevailing sentiments of the community demand the abolition of private property, a contingency that is exceedingly remote, the lawmakers and the courts would be duty bound to give rational expression to this fact in the laws of the land. For it is out of the stuff of the social conscience that laws are made and here they find their ultimate sanction.

[1] 219 U. S., 110 (1911), p. 111.

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CHAPTER XVIII

MECHANISM AND MORALS

An examination of the material structure of modern society will show that it is essentially industrial in nature and that it has two poles, the machine and business enterprise. The technology of our modern life, that is its methods of procedure in the mastery and direction of physical and human energy, is based upon the machine. The business enterprise that animates the machine process is dominated by the capitalist-manager or the entrepreneur whose chief incentive is profits. There are of course large sections of our modern life that are not dominated by the philosophy of the machine, just as there are classes that are not prompted primarily by the desire for gain. But the strategic position occupied by the entrepreneur in the business world and the dominance of the machine, especially in those industrial processes of vital concern to human welfare, lend to these two facts an importance that is entirely paramount in the industrial life of the nation. The problem of social morality, therefore, so far as industry and business are concerned, falls into two phases. The first of these has to do with the cultural incidence of the machine upon the character and the way of life of the people. The second phase deals with the ethics of business enterprise, which is most intimately connected with the machine process. In this chapter we have to deal with the first phase of the problem.

§ 1. The Machine Process

To understand the rôle of the machine process in modern life we must define what we mean by the machine. The distinction between a tool such as a scythe and a machine such as a lawn-mower is fairly clear. Such ancient and honorable

implements as the distaff and the hand-loom we should also class as tools rather than as machines. But was Kay's fly-shuttle, invented in 1738 to do the work of two weavers, a tool or a machine? When Hargreave devised an instrument for turning eight spindles, which he called "spinning Jenny", after his wife, did he transform the spinning wheel into a machine? When does a tool become a machine? "When a tool is removed", says Hobson, "from the direct and individual guidance of the handicraftsman and placed in a mechanism which governs its action by the prearranged motion of some other tool or mechanical instrument, it ceases to be a tool and becomes part of a machine". It will be seen, therefore, that there are two things involved in the idea of a machine, namely, complexity of mechanical process and the automatic character of this process. The directive agency man must supply in the case of the tool is absorbed by the composite character of the machine. In handling a scythe one must direct the cutting edge both in the matter of speed and the angle of contact to get the desired results. In the lawn-mower these factors are taken care of by the mechanism itself and it is only necessary to supply the power. Man determines both when and how the tool shall act, while the machine, to a certain extent at least, is self-sufficient and beyond his control.

The machine, more than any one factor, determines the daily routine of our lives. The average American lives in a house constructed of machine-made bricks, cement, lumber, nails, glass, and furniture; he takes his morning bath in a machine-made tub, the water for which is provided and heated by machinery; after having arrayed himself in machine-made clothing, he reads his machine-made newspaper, and he sits down to a breakfast of edibles gathered from the four corners of the world and scientifically prepared as a result of the application of the machine to transportation, agriculture, cold storage, and cooking; he finds his way to the city, ascends to his place of work in some lofty building by the aid of a machine; throughout a busy day he follows a machine, fitting

his ideas and acts into its arbitrary mechanical rhythm; finally a machine which told him when to start tells him when to stop his work.

The machine has in fact transformed, within the last two or three generations, the very structure and spirit of our civilization. There is hardly a phase of our contact with men and things that it has not modified. Consider, for example, the alteration of our conception of time by the machine process. To-day we are forced to order our lives according to a nicely balanced and mechanically determined schedule of hours unknown and indeed unnecessary under the old domestic economy of the eighteenth century. "Standard time" and the exacting requirements it makes upon our movements is the result, as the term indicates, of the application of the machine to transportation by rail. We use the colloquialism, to "get left", derived originally from the exigencies of railroad travel, in a general way to describe our failure to meet some one of the countless standardizations imposed by the machine process upon our civilization. To-day in fact, thanks to the reign of machine-made time, the words of the wise man bid fair to be realized, "To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under the sun".

It is obvious that there are two phases of the machine process, the mechanical and the social. The first has to do with those mechanical processes by which man makes use of tools and mechanical appliances for the satisfaction of his wants. This is the machine process in the narrower sense of the term. The machine, however, must be reckoned with as a factor in civilization. The secondary and larger phase of the machine process, therefore, is concerned with the disciplinary effect of the machine industry upon character, ideals, and culture.

It is of course difficult to distinguish accurately between these two phases of the machine process. Consider, for example, the shoe industry. We have first the mediation and application of power to definite ends in the making of the shoe. There is a definite machine for dozens of different

stages, such as preparing the leather, making soles, uppers, eyelets, and the like. Each machine, however, is an integral part of the entire process involved in the making of the shoe and implies the stage preceding and that following. The machine process in the making of the shoe commands, furthermore, various other processes of a chemical or biological nature. Variations in labor, transportation, market values, all enter as factors. Even the weather, heat and cold, wind and tide, are laid under tribute by the machine. The machine process strives to introduce unity and coördination into all these varying elements involved in the making of a shoe by insisting as far as possible upon quantitative exactness. The machine demands units of weight, size, elasticity, density, chemical constituency, time, labor, money-value, style, and the like. It is only through this process of mechanical standardization that the close and profitable coördination of all the factors involved in making and marketing a shoe is possible. But the shoe industry depends directly upon other industries, such as the leather industry, with its world-wide affiliations, the labor situation, the tool manufacturers, the mills that supply thread and all the material that goes into the shoe. Here again the mechanical demand for standardization is felt. For the various related industries must provide the shoe manufacturer with a standardized product. It is in fact this process of standardization that makes possible the vast and delicately articulated structure of modern business. The further this mechanical concatenation of industries is extended, the easier they are to administer and the more satisfactorily they lend themselves to the calculation of profits, which is the driving force of business enterprise. There is also the disadvantage that disturbance at one point tends to derange the entire structure. For modern industry has one vast coördination of machine-made units through the standardizations introduced through machine industry.

But this unification of industry by means of the standardizing effects of the machine is only one phase of the machine process and that phase is external, mechanical, artificial, phys-

ical. Hand in hand with this goes the subjective, the moral, and the human side. For the machine process moulds human material as well as physical. The mental attitudes of the average man are correlatives of his daily activities, his habitual way of life. Codes of ethics spring up in connection with particular phases of industry, professions, or sources of income. There is an ethical code for the steel worker, the bricklayer, the coal miner, the railroad employee, just as there is a code of ethics peculiar to lawyer, doctor, minister, or "captain of industry". Now in so far as the machine process makes itself felt in the lives of men either as groups or as a community we must expect it to register itself in their philosophy of life. Obviously the effects of the machine process will be most in evidence among those classes that are required to think and act most directly and incessantly in terms of the machine, namely, the industrial worker. Even here a distinction is to be made between those workers that submit blindly and uncritically to the discipline of the machine and those, such as skilled mechanics, who gain insight into the principles of the machine. The expert scientific manager is in danger, as we shall see, of becoming the very incarnation of the machine process.

§ 2. The Philosophy of the Machine

The cultural incidence of the machine process upon our modern life is too vast and intricate to be fitly characterized in a few words. As an economic factor the machine has made possible a fabulous increase in the production of goods, thereby assuring an abundant supply of the necessities of life. The machine process has multiplied the capital of the world with all the possibilities this implies for the advancement of culture, notwithstanding what may be said as to present inequality in the distribution of wealth. Without the aid of the machine in the matter of transportation, communication and the rapid spread of knowledge it may be seriously doubted whether advanced democracy as we now know it would have been possible. In spite of the unthoughted op-

position to the spread of the machine process by the workman it has in fact increased both his wages and the gross amount of his work. The conclusion of the economist is that the status of the worker to-day is at least no worse than before the industrial revolution. The machine, furthermore, is not without a certain moral discipline in that it encourages the virtues of promptness, accuracy, and temperance. A former Commissioner of Labor, Carroll D. Wright, has asserted, " The greatest single influence in the United States, making for temperance, is the railroad ".

But the immediate task before us is not so much the evaluation of the machine and its place in life as a whole as the principles it tends to emphasize, the philosophy of life it encourages. Obviously the occupations that bring men most directly into contact with the machine, thereby making it the constant object of sense-perceptions and of reasoning processes, will be most susceptible to its influence. But, as has already been suggested, the machine permeates every phase of modern life.

Any understanding of the philosophy of the machine must start with the principle upon which the machine is based, namely, causation. By Plato and the theologians of the Middle Ages causation was conceived anthropomorphically. That is to say, all causal phenomena were thought to imply will, intelligence, purpose. In purpose as it exists in the infinite mind was found the ultimate source of all the causes in the universe. This doctrine of final causes prevailed until the formulation of modern scientific method by Keppler, Galileo and Newton. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it was usual to explain causation in terms of the quantitative equivalence of cause and effect. It is possible that this idea of causation reflects the age of the handicrafts where every effect finds its adequate cause in the skill and energy of the worker. Certainly this idea of causation was thoroughly in harmony with the rationalism of the eighteenth century, the theological expression of which was deism with its conception of God as

the " Great Artificer ", who assures the ordered and balanced interplay of the forces of the universe. The disciplinary effect of the machine process, however, has habituated men to think of causation neither as purpose nor as equivalence but as a process. In a complicated machine such as a printing press what interests us is neither the initiation of the energy nor the end sought but the marvelous interrelation of parts, the unbroken transmission of energy and movement. In England where the machine process had its inception and greatest influence, thinkers began to explain the facts of nature in terms of process or the way they behave. Veblen even insists that the machine process suggested to Darwin his revolutionary theory, though this appears doubtful. It will hardly be denied, however, that scientists now conceive of causation pragmatically. A cause is measured and explained in terms of what it does. Questions of absolute origins or of ultimate ends are eliminated and attention is fixed upon the immediate experiential process.

It is evident, therefore, that the machine is materialistic. Its materialism, however, is one of method. That is to say, the implications of its technology and way of behavior imply only the forces and laws peculiar to the material world. The machine makes no claim either to exhaust experience or to give us insight into the ultimate constitution of things. It neither affirms nor denies the existence of spiritual values; for the machine these things are simply non-existent. The machine envisages reality in terms of units of measurement that contemplate a certain *quantum;* it has no scale by which to estimate the *quale* of things. The machine can give us the " what " of experience but not the " how ". All those precious values that lie at the heart of morals, art, and religion are for the machine process only illusions or achieve reality as they affect the quantitative phase of being. The machine shatters the teeming fulness of life and from the fragments erects the inert, static, artificial world of mechanical human ingenuities. It is the affiliation of economics with the quantitative units of the machine process which perhaps more

than anything else has won for it the epithet of the "dismal science". For whatever draws its inspiration from the machine process is apt to become "dispassionate, opaque, unteleological" like the brute matter with which the machine deals.

Naturally the machine process emphasizes physical force. It is itself merely a cleverly devised scheme for the harnessing and utilizing of energy. The worship of power that was the bane of the last century, culminating in the *Machtpolitik* of Germany, was to no small degree the result of the triumphs of the machine. Men were educated to measure all forces, including those that make for political greatness, in terms of the machine. Where national economies were patterned after the closely articulated structure of a vast machine it was imagined that the acme of perfection had been attained. The gospel of "efficiency" of which we hear so much in business has many points in common with the *Wille-zur-Macht* of Prussianism. On closer analysis it often turns out to be a worship of power made possible by the triumphs of the machine process in industry. "The outcome of it all is an artificial civilization founded on the cult of mechanism and power, a civilization whose works continually run counter to the deeper will of the race, and this for the simple reason that the principle at its root wrongly interprets the nature of man. Man is not a machine neither in body nor in mind".[1]

The machine is intensely prosaic and matter-of-fact. There is no place for fairy stories in the machine process. The heaven-storming flights of poetic imagination where man's spirit comes into its own are utterly foreign to the genius of the machine. Even the imagination of the scientist is cribbed, cabined, confined, and forced to follow the orthodox, predestinated path of the machine. Because of its matter-of-factness the machine places a premium on mediocrity. Its mania is standardization, and to standardize is to vulgarize. If we take democracy to mean egalitarianism, then the machine is the

[1] Jacks, "Mechanism, Diabolism, and the War", *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XIII, p. 31.

great democratizer. For the machine is the great leveller. It ruthlessly ignores all claims to respectability, uniqueness, originality, or nobleness. For the machine there are no Celestial Mountains just as there is no Dante's Inferno. What does not fall within its quantitative standardization is non-existent. The machine is utterly indifferent to all man's struggles for righteousness. It knows neither beauty nor goodness nor truth. It works the will of the devil just as effectively as that of God. For it there is neither wrath nor ruth.

The machine is neither immoral nor moral; it is unmoral. The machine in fact illustrates the curious dualism that exists between idea and belief, pure thought and conduct. For the machine is the product of pure reason. The industrial revolution like the political rationalism of John Locke and Thomas Paine and the economic rationalism of Adam Smith is the product of the eighteenth century. It resulted from the application of cold reason to industry as illustrated in the inventions of Hargreaves, Cartwright, and Watt. Now it is obvious that a clear-cut logical process such as a proposition of Euclid admits of no moral issue. The *pons assinorum* would be true apparently though righteousness should perish from the universe. The same is true of the principles underlying the lever or the steam-engine. They belong to a sphere of reality that ethics does not touch. For we can only have a moral issue where there is freedom, contingency, the element of adventure. The machine fits only a deterministic world scheme and for this reason it is unmoral. The spirit of the machine is strikingly illustrated in the crowning product of the machine process, namely, the corporation. The corporation has been called "soulless" because it represents the cold, impersonal, unmoral, and indefectible philosophy of the machine applied to business on a large scale.

The machine process is sceptical and iconoclastic towards all our ancient loyalties. The scepticism of the machine philosophy is negative rather than positive. It spreads lack of faith not so much by what it actually does as by what it fails to do. The scepticism of the machine is an implication

of a way of life and for this reason is all the more deadly. Our beliefs as well as our doubts are not so much the result of speculative thought as the subtle creation of a way of life. The machine ignores, as we have seen, large areas of experience that are qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. To live a life dominated by the machine process is, by implication at least, to negate these values. We are forced to live as though they were non-existent. Thus the machine process cuts across the time-honored loyalties embodied in law and the social conscience of the business man in that it calmly inaugurates situations in the business and industrial orders in which these ancient forms of social rectitude become meaningless.

The employer, for example, supported by the law and inherited social traditions, opposes the principle of collective bargaining put forward by union labor. He argues that the rights of freedom of contract between man and man, embodied in the common law and sanctioned by the traditional ethics, do not recognize collective bargaining as demanded by the worker. But the machine process, which the employer has furthered, has created a situation in which this old individualistic conception of freedom of contract does not apply and is actually negated by the present stage of industrial evolution. To be sure, the ethical question involved is for the machine process non-existent, for the machine process moves at a level untouched by moral values. But the actual effect of the machine process is to encourage moral scepticism on the part of the worker towards the traditional conceptions of the old individualistic ethic. He is forced to live in an industrial order in which these norms are ignored and he is schooled in time to look upon them as invalidated. Any belief or rule of conduct for which we can find no practical use is already in process of being discredited.

The machine process is irreligious. Take, for example, the belief in a personal God. It is hardly in harmony with the materialistic point of view of the machine. This master of modern life knows no supernatural sovereign. It speaks only

of impersonal physical energy. In the predetermined order of the machine there is no place for sin and forgiveness. To the workman soaked with the philosophy of the machine the kindly and paternalistic attitude of the church is an unwarranted impertinence. The church ordinances, with their mystic appeal, become empty, meaningless mummery. If we follow the evolution of the theistic concept down through the rationalism of the eighteenth century and the triumph of the machine process in the nineteenth to the present, we find that the "Great Artificer" of the eighteenth century tends to disappear with the displacement of the handicraftsman by the machine. The machine technology that dominates our modern life is blandly and baldly atheistic. Where it dominates, a mental attitude is encouraged which, if not downright sceptical, is at least indifferent towards the traditional religious beliefs.

In his poem "The Brute" W. V. Moody thus portrays the darker phase of the machine process:

"Through his might men work their wills.
They have boweled out the hills
For food to keep him toiling in the cages they have wrought;
And they fling him hour by hour,
Limbs of men to give him power;
Brains of men to give him cunning; and for dainties to devour
Children's souls, the little worth; hearts of women cheaply bought:
He takes them and he breaks them, but he gives them scanty thought.

"Quietude and loveliness,
Holy sights that heal and bless,
They are scattered and abolished where his iron hoof is set;
When he splashes through the brae
Silver streams are choked with clay,
When he snorts the bright cliffs crumble and the woods go down like hay;
He lairs in pleasant cities, and the haggard people fret
Squalid 'mid their new-got riches, soot-begrimed and desolate.

"They who caught and bound him tight
Laughed exultant at his might,
Saying, 'Now behold the good time comes for the weariest and the least!

We will use this lusty knave:
No more need for men to slave:
We may rise and look about us and have knowledge ere the grave.'
But the Brute said in his breast, 'Till the mills I grind have ceased,
The riches shall be dust of dust, dry ashes be the feast!

"'On the strong and cunning few
Cynic favors I will strew;
I will stuff their maw with overplus until their spirit dies;
From the patient and the low
I will take the joys they know;
They shall hunger after vanities and still ahungering go.
Madness shall be on the people, ghastly jealousies arise;
Brother's blood shall cry on brother up the dead and empty skies.

"'I will burn and dig and hack
Till the heavens suffer lack;
God shall feel a pleasure fail Him, crying to his cherubim,
"Who hath flung yon mud ball there
Where my world went green and fair?"
I shall laugh and hug me, hearing how his sentinels declare,
"'Tis the Brute they chained to labor! He has made the bright earth dim.
Stores of wares and pelf a plenty, but they get no good of him."'"

Western civilization which for the best part of a century has been in the grip of the machine process and has sung the power and the cunning of its master was rudely awakened from its dream by the apparition of a mail-clad giant in Europe proclaiming the philosophy of the machine in the name of *Kultur*. The specter of sixty-five millions of people, trained to the highest pitch of efficiency, organized under masterful and unscrupulous leaders, obsessed with the philosophy

[1] Kipling, to be sure, has shown us in his "M'Andrew's Hymn" that there is a poetry of the machine that is noble and religious. But even this poetry presupposes a fixed and fatalistic order, as is seen in the following lines Kipling puts into the mouth of his Calvinistic Scotch engineer.

"From coupler-flange to spindle-guide I see Thy Hand, O God—
Predestination in the stride o' yon connectin'-rod.
John Calvin might ha' forged the same—enormous, certain, slow—
Ay, wrought it in the furnace-flame—*my* 'Institutio.'"

of the machine and headed for world-conquest, froze the heart of the western world with terror. Here was a monstrosity grim and terrible, cradled in the Eden which we fondly dreamed the machine was in a fair way to create for man. This nightmare with its gospel of frightfulness made possible by the machine convinced us that after all we were living in a fool's paradise. Once more man had been cruelly tricked and that by his own creature. He must tame the "Brute" that threatens his higher life and start out once again on the *via dolorosa* that seems to have no end in his eternal quest for the land of his heart's desire.

The terror aroused in mankind by the revelation of the spirit of the machine in all its devilishness in militaristic Germany is not a new experience in the history of the race. Men have always entertained more or less fear of the machine. We do not associate this fear, however, with the tool. Around familiar tools such as the distaff, the axe or the pen are centered intimate and appealing human sentiments that have found expression in poetry, music, and art. The machine, on the other hand, especially if it combines power with complexity and mystery, arouses in us distrust which under certain circumstances mounts to indescribable terror. Why do we love the tool and fear the machine? The answer is that the tool is the servant of the human will and in the case of the artist or skilled worker is almost a part of himself and breathes his own rational and creative genius. The machine, on the other hand, is independent of the will, self-sufficient, indifferent. It works with rhythmic, deadly, predestinated accuracy. It is the grinning skeleton of a self that is utterly without a soul. It has the precision, the logical sequence, the coördination and finality of reason but is devoid of conscience. When, therefore, the machine closes in upon us and seeks to subject us to its economy the very essence of personality is threatened, namely, the free, creative, moral will. We fear the machine, therefore, because when it seeks to rule it becomes a moral monstrosity.

To surrender to the machine process, therefore, is to

negate all those values that make human life worth while. The horror of German militarism lay in the mechanizing of an entire civilization. It was the spectacle of a great people organized with all the effectiveness of a skilfully articulated machine and yet actuated by the conscience of a mob that filled the world with a nameless horror. For here was a transvaluation of values that seemed to change our hard won paradise into a hell. Mankind had been taught to associate the achievements of science with the darling aspirations of the race. Now men beheld to their dismay the devil masquerading in the apparel of an angel of light. The disillusionment was a terrible one but it has brought much searching of the heart. It has taught us that the machine process can only be of value as it is made to serve and not to rule the spirit of man. For the human intellect to be terrified at its own contrivance is to acknowledge its own weakness and stupidity. The future belongs to those who neither fear the machine nor blindly bow to its rule but who make it serve the cause of justice, mercy, and truth.

§ 3. The Cultural Incidence of the Machine

It is to be expected that the philosophy of the machine would be most in evidence among those most directly concerned, namely, the workers. This is to a certain extent true. The testimony of those in close touch with the industrial worker is to the effect that he is inclined to a more or less mechanistic world-view. Society is judged in terms of the machine's philosophy. "Suffering, love, mercy, faith, hope, are nothing to this universal dominating and transforming physical force. The explosion is not delayed, the fire burns, the knife cuts, the machine mangles, and the process goes on unmoved by the defiance of the strong or the prayers and sufferings of the weak or the just".[1] At trade union meetings and in their literature are found such expressions as "Physical power the motive force of everything; might is

[1] Hoxie, "Class Conflict," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XIII, p. 777.

right". The machine philosophy as to the structure of society is seen in the statements, "The capitalists perform no work", "Employers are parasites", "Property rights are not rights but privileges".

Sceptical and iconoclastic attitudes towards the traditional economic and moral standards induced by the discipline of the machine process can be detected in the following, "Labor has no reason to be patriotic; the capitalists own the country", "The Church and State—the great pillars of the capitalists and of capitalistic society". "Self-denial and saving are not virtues for the workers but should be condemned". "Contracts with the employers are not sacred". "Competition for others, not for us. Rival organizations are futile and a detriment". There is, however, abundant evidence that the worker is not dominated by the philosophy of the machine. The eternally human in him would never tolerate such a humiliation. It is in the opposition of the unions to scientific management, the last refinement of the machine process, that this emerges clearly, as we shall see in a later chapter. Trade unionism is in fact a protest against the logic of the machine process in the interest of larger human values.

The philosophy of the machine is most clearly in evidence in that phase of the industrial world for which it is chiefly responsible, namely, in the modern large corporation. The materialism, the impersonal selfishness, the heartless exercise of power, the cold and unscrupulous rationalism that has made the term "big business" anathema in the minds of many good people is to be explained by the fact that the large-scale business of to-day still to a large extent reflects the spirit of the machine process of which it is but the creature. The influence of the machine is in evidence in the impersonality of society. The machine is assuming more and more of those services that men once performed for each other. The telephone, the telegraph and the printing press have depersonalized our social contacts. Even the people on a crowded street-car hurrying to their places of business are wrapped in an atmosphere of impersonal remoteness. This impersonality

made possible by the machine saves time and energy, to be sure, but at the sacrifice of the social and moral discipline gained through entering sympathetically and intelligently into the lives of our fellows. It makes the problem of securing democratic like-mindedness increasingly difficult.

Corresponding to the impersonality of the Great Society demanded by the machine we have the impersonality of the money-economy. In the rapid whirl of our modern industrial order, with its multifarious mechanical standardizations and its utter indifference to those values represented by ethics, religion and democracy, the machine process when allowed free play, works like a powerful acid to disintegrate the tissues of the social organism. It is not only impersonal but it favors a sort of mechanical atomism. The human atom is related to the industrial establishment or to the community not by the ties of home, church, party or a sense of duty but by the demands of the various applications of physical energy to production, transportation and distribution that have been standardized and rationally coördinated by the machine process. He is shifted from machine to machine in the shop, from trade to trade, from employment to employment, from city to city, from hemisphere to hemisphere, according to the impersonal demands of the machine process. Because of this impersonal and mechanical atomism peculiar to the machine process it becomes imperatively necessary to have some universal arbiter of values, a common denominator to which these various standardizations of the machine process can be reduced. The dollar coördinates the mechanical units of the machine process and saves us from chaos. Yet the dollar partakes of the impersonality of these units. The pecuniary impersonalism of the dollar, therefore, is the correlative of the mechanical impersonalism of the machine process.

It is in scientific management, however, that the last refinements in the philosophy of the machine process appear. In it we find expressed the quintessence of the spirit of the machine. Scientific management, so its great protagonist Mr. Taylor tells us, breaks frankly with the former most approved

managerial philosophy, namely, "initiative and incentive" or "putting it up" to the worker to secure increased output and interest in the work through bonuses and the like. Craft knowledge is carefully accumulated, systematized, tested mainly in terms of time and motion study, and tabulated in the manager's office, the data in an ordinary machine shop often filling "thousands of pages". The manager carefully outlines "at least one day in advance" the work of each mechanic down to the smallest motion, on the task plan, after the worker himself has been scientifically selected for the task. The worker coöperates with the manager in training and perfecting himself until he is able to do the work in the described time and method. The worker then receives from thirty to one hundred percent increase in wages.[1] It is claimed that the man well suited to his job "will thrive while working at this rate during a long term of years and grow happier and more prosperous, instead of being overworked." The essential thing in scientific management seems to be time and motion study whether applied to the pig iron handler, the bricklayer or the clerk in the office. Upon this is based its claim to be a science and from this we must take our point of departure in estimating its value in the furthering of human welfare.

Throughout Mr. Taylor's book one detects a broader and a narrower sense in which he discusses scientific management. He warns against confusing the "mechanism" of scientific management with "certain broad general principles, a certain philosophy, which can be applied in many ways." The mechanism varies indefinitely with the shop, the manager, the men, the kind of work; the principles remain the same. Taylor claims that the opposition of workers and others to scientific management is due largely to the confusion of the immediate means used with the fundamental principles concerned. Looking at the actual timing and studying of the individual worker the unions get a wrong impression. They see "a cowering workman over whom stands a labor driver.

[1] F. W. Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management*, pp. 30 ff.

In one hand he holds a split-second watch. In the other he has a sheet of paper on which are set down the elementary motions of which the job is made up, with spaces opposite each in which may be recorded the time taken by the worker to make each motion. The watch is started. The workman jumps to his task ".[1] This, on the face of it, seems a heartless humiliation of the worker by asking him to become a mere machine in a laboratory.

But Mr. Taylor asks us to take the larger point of view and to remember that the experimenter seeks " the fundamental principles of scientific management applicable to all kinds of human activities, from our simplest individual acts to the work of our great corporations ". When these have been worked out experimentally we shall have a basis upon which to secure peace between the worker and his employer. Then the foundations will be laid for industrial democracy and social justice. The fickle and uncertain forces of public opinion will be ruled out. There will be no need for commissions to arbitrate between labor and capital. The rights of all will be determined upon fixed scientific principles. Instead of the autocratic rule of employer we shall have the democracy of science. The hateful supervision of the foreman and superintendent will disappear in the mutual understanding of common interests based upon universal laws. The worker will devote himself to that task for which he is best fitted. Promotion will not be left to prejudice or politics but will take place on the basis of absolute scientifically determined merit. Trade unions will be superfluous. The powerful associations of manufacturers will seek only the ends of peace and industrial harmony. In other words, scientific management " has for its sole aim the attainment of justice for all three parties (employer, worker, and the public) through impartial scientific investigation of all the elements in the problem ". The genuine idealism and sense of social service expressed here and in all of Taylor's writings are thoroughly admirable. It is only to be wished that this

[1] Hoxie, *Trade Unionism in the United States,* p. 305.

idealism were based upon a philosophy that could stand the test of intensive criticism.

Underlying the language of Taylor and his followers is the assumption of a "code of natural laws equally binding upon employers and workmen", not made by men and hence beyond human power to change, a code furthermore that can be established in definite scientific fashion independent of human temperaments, prejudices, or emotional reactions. Through the study of time and motion it is possible to formulate these laws and when they are thus formulated justice becomes merely a matter of their scientific application to the relations of the worker and his employer. Furthermore, these purely mechanical elements of space, time, motion, and energy provide us with a measure of values by which moral worth, intelligence, promotion, distribution of profits and the thousand and one matters of purely ethical import can be settled. Certainly modern life exhibits no more naïve, and we might almost say pathetic, confidence in the omnipotence of the machine to solve all our problems. There is in fact something in this enthusiasm of the scientific manager for the material principles underlying the machine process that reminds one of the *amor intellectualis dei* of Spinoza. After having laid the ghost of the political and ethical absolute that masqueraded under the form of natural rights we are met by another absolute, tricked out this time in all the trappings of the modern scientific laboratory.

In the claims of scientific management stand revealed all the weaknesses inherent in the philosophy of the machine. It fails to distinguish the mechanical and material from the purely human. So far as the merely mechanical elements in time and motion are concerned, scientific management possibly has much to give us. The conclusion of an authoritative critic, however, is that even here scientific method is "not capable of yielding objective results, uninfluenced or uninfluenceable by human will and judgment".[1] Hoxie gives no less than seventeen factors affecting time and motion

[1] Hoxie, *Trade Unionism in the United States*, p. 312.

studies that can not be reduced to exact scientific terms. True to the spirit of the philosophy of the machine, scientific method treats the qualitative phase of human experience, to which belongs the field of ethics as well as of religion, as practically non-existent. Instead of scientific management, therefore, being the embodiment of justice and equity its arbitrary and mechanical handling of these delicate situations where human rights are concerned may make it the very incarnation of injustice.

§ 4. The Machine Process and the Social Organism

The philosophy of the machine must take precedence in every form of economic determinism. For if man's ideals, ethical, political, artistic, religious, or what not, are shaped in the main by those activities that are concerned with the satisfaction of fundamental needs such as food, drink, clothing, shelter, it follows that the machine process built up in the satisfaction of these needs must condition our philosophy of life. Socialists of the Karl Marx school have not been able to escape this implication of their philosophy in spite of their broad humanitarianism and their repudiation of the outworn individualism and natural rights of classical economists and the average business man.

The same criticism applies to the brilliantly suggestive writings of Professor Thornstein Veblen who contends that the machine process, while not the only factor concerned, is the dominant force in modern society. He argues that the machine process has divided society into two groups, the pecuniary and the industrial, that are unsympathetic and unalterably opposed; it has caused moral anarchy by rendering nugatory the norms of natural rights underlying the law and the social conscience through the creation of a new industrial order in which these norms have no meaning; while discrediting ancient loyalties in ethics and religion the machine offers us instead no constructive program for the future; it forces men to think in terms of the opaque, unteleological and unmoral principles of mechanical causation. Veblen closes his

chapter on "Civilization and the Machine Process" with this language: "The machine discipline, however, touches wider and wider circles of the population, and touches them in an increasingly intimate and coercive fashion. In the nature of the case, therefore, the resistance opposed to this cultural trend given by the machine discipline on grounds of conceived conventions weakens with the passage of time. The spread of materialistic matter-of-fact preconceptions takes place at a cumulatively accelerating rate, except in so far as some other cultural factor, alien to the machine discipline, comes in to inhibit its spread and keep its disintegrating influence within bounds".[1] This pessimistic conclusion is inevitable once we set out with the assumption of the dominance of the machine factor in society.

It is true, as the economic determinist contends, that one's beliefs, habits of thought or social sympathies are the correlatives largely of his activities in the satisfaction of economic needs. The group that depends upon income and profits for a livelihood will in so far forth have a different social ethics from the group that depends upon a daily wage. But the economic determinist is open to two criticisms. First, he resolves every phase of the individual's environment back into the economic element or else makes the economic element paramount, and secondly he ignores or minimizes the elements of custom and tradition. Man is an animal, to be sure, and like all animals concerned with the problem of material needs. But man is also more than an animal. He has other interests than the immediate one of getting a living, such as religion, morals, art, education, and science. Furthermore, the immediate problem of getting a living is concerned with the present and indirectly with the future. But every individual is molded in countless ways by the sentiments, ideals, social customs and institutions that have come down from the past. He clings to these even when they complicate the immediate problem of getting a living. How can economic determinism

[1] Veblen's theory of the machine process is set forth in his *Theory of Business Enterprise*, Chaps. III and IX, and *The Instinct of Workmanship*, Chap. VII.

explain the long and expensive and dangerous journey made by the Moslems of Southern Russia to Mecca to visit the tomb of the Prophet?

There is, however, back of the contention of Veblen and others that society is dominated by the materialistic philosophy of the machine a more fundamental assumption. This contention implies that the stupendous fabric of the machine process not only stands in intimate and organic relation to society but also that in and through it the real trend of social evolution is suggested. We have seen that the machine process has facilitated combination and mutualization to an unprecedented degree. It has encouraged specialization of function; through its infinite diversity opportunities for varying talents have been increased. It has introduced stratifications and groupings of society unequalled in their richness by any other age. But the question may well be raised as to whether the present dominance of the machine is real or artificial. Is it merely something that has been superinduced in more or less hasty and irrational fashion upon human civilization within the last century or does it represent a permanent and healthful development? This question is of vital interest for the problem of the relation of the machine process to the social conscience.

In organic evolution differentiation of parts and functions goes hand in hand with closer integration of the parts in one whole. This law seems to hold not only as we mount from the amoeba to man but also in the slow ascent from the horde to democracy. Tested by this law, modern industrial society seems to be an organic development. For we have seen how the standardization through machine-made units has made possible an infinite variety of activities together with the most delicate balance and interdependence in the articulation of the different parts in the industrial world. Must we, therefore, conclude that the machine process as at present constituted is an organic development? Not necessarily, for there is another test of a living organism, namely, the presence everywhere of one common life process. In the higher or-

ganism that common life is symbolized by the blood that freely circulates and vitalizes all the parts. The industrial order must measure up to this test before it can justly claim to be a living organism.

The vitalizing principle of industry is labor. In business enterprise the driving force is pecuniary, namely, profits. But neither of these can provide us with the principle that vitalizes human relationships in their last analysis. The life of a democratic society, and of the machine process as an integral part of that society, must be found in community of ideals, in a body of intelligent and effective social sentiment. In a democracy, in particular, science, education, law, government, as well as the vast and intricate technology developed in connection with industry, are subordinated to the one supreme test of a common social point of view, the acknowledgement of a body of authoritative norms, without which we are left at the mercy of human passions or the blind play of brute force. Judged from this point of view it can hardly be said that the industrial order, as at present constituted, is either an organic unit in itself or organically related, as it should be, to other phases of the social order. It is a familiar fact, alluded to in an earlier chapter on the Great Society, that there are large areas of the modern business life that have not yet been brought under the control of the social conscience. Furthermore, there are other phases of life in which the ethical standards are higher than in business. This is frankly admitted when it is asserted that business scorns sentiment. The opposition that the machine process has raised is due to the failure to vitalize it with an efficient and intelligent social conscience. The machine process in and of itself has infinite potentialities for human betterment. But to seek in the principle of physical causation upon which it is built the measure of values for its use and the philosophy that is to provide us with the driving force of society as a whole is grievous injustice to the machine process itself. The trellis that bears the vine may be coherent and logically articulated but in and of itself it is dead, inert, a gaunt and unlovely skeleton. When

its firm and logical framework has been appropriated by the vine it becomes eloquent with the beauty and freshness of an expanding organism. Its mechanical form is gathered up into the higher life of the vine and gains a new significance because it serves this higher life. Much in the same way must we conceive of the function of the vast mechanical framework of the machine process in the social organism. It is here to serve, not to rule the life of man.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WORKER AND THE MACHINE PROCESS

§ 1. The Subordination of the Worker to the Machine

It is worth while examining more in detail the effect of the machine process upon the character and the point of view of the industrial worker. In the old days of the skilled worker his pride in his craftsmanship was a spur to efficiency; it was the basis for a genuine group conscience. The system of apprenticeship was the disciplinary method for training the prospective worker in the ideals and methods of the group. To-day both the old-fashioned skilled worker and the system of apprenticeship are gone, thanks to the spread of the machine industry. For the old incentive of craftsmanship has been substituted the pecuniary appeal of a wage as machine-tender. When the offer of higher wages tempted the young apprentice to break his contract, the old system of apprenticeship was doomed. With the break-down of apprenticeships came the distribution of the workers to the different kinds of machines under the guidance of shop managers. The worker then became an "operator"; his work supplemented that of the machine. The next step was the creation of the "fool proof" machine, which meant the transfer of brains and ingenuity to the office, leaving for the individual worker a minimum of mechanical movements assimilated as closely as possible to the machine. Thus was drawn a line of demarkation between those in the office who work with their hands and those in the mill whose mental initiative is delimited by the demands of a fixed mechanical process. Opportunity for initiative and the arousal of interest are thereby reduced to a minimum. The worker becomes the human satellite of an impersonal machine. His genius is made to fit the repetitious,

predetermined round of a causal sequence devised by another man's brain.

It would be a mistake to imagine that this gradual subordination of the worker to the machine was an unmitigated misfortune. In the first place, it should be born in mind that there is no necessary and fundamental antagonism between the machine process and human ingenuity. Whatever evil there is in the machine process would seem to be due to its misapplication rather than to its inherent constitution. For the introduction of the machine has increased the command over the raw material and made man the master of his physical environment. The substitution of the machine means, at least theoretically, that so much human energy has been set free for the pursuit of higher ends. This is particularly noticeable in the disappearance of unskilled labor. Formerly, in plants of the synthetic type such as steel mills, blast furnaces and paper mills, unskilled labor was used in handling the material. But, thanks to the introduction of conveying machinery, this use of the laborer as a draft animal is largely disappearing. The logical result of this should be the increased employment of men and women in ways that call out their higher powers.

Two great classes of productive work have thus far resisted the dominion of the machine, the so-called "sweated industries" and intellectual and artistic activities. The latter from the nature of the case will never be taken over by the machine. The former are the product of "arrested development" in the economic order. A combination of forces such as immigration, the sudden transition from the agricultural to the manufacturing stage as in the South, the laying off of workers owing to inventions, the exodus of the woman from the home to the factory, ensures a constant supply of cheap labor, thus making it unprofitable for the entrepreneur to introduce machinery. "Economic and social progress demands the destruction of these arrested developments: sanitary and other humanitarian legislation should harry the sweating den; technical and general education should implant

more skill and evoke more wants; trade organization, where practicable, should make for higher wages and other improved conditions of employment ".[1] In order to save this type of labor from its inherent weaknesses it must be absorbed into the machine process.

Not only does the machine process tend to emancipate the worker from many forms of drudgery and exhausting toil; it has also raised the level of his intelligence. The machine, to be sure, demands that the worker must subordinate himself to it. But to do this successfully requires a measure of intelligence and previous training. The modern machine worker must be a master of a body of general technological knowledge not at all necessary under the old domestic economy. This body of knowledge is constantly increasing, both intensively and extensively. This is strikingly illustrated in the matter of illiteracy. Contrast the worker of to-day with the handicraftsman of the Elizabethan age. Illiteracy did not debar the latter from membership in a skilled trade while to-day it is a very distinct handicap. The knowledge now required in many skilled occupations is of such a character that it can no longer be picked up in the daily routine, a fact that is being recognized by the introduction of technical training into the schools. Finally, the machine with its emphasis upon law, exactitude and continuity may be said to have a certain educative value. The fundamental defect of the machine as an educator, however, is its hopeless conservatism. Where there is nothing to relieve this conservatism it tends to dehumanize the worker.

In spite of these advantages the tendency of the machine process to dehumanize the activity and status of the worker gave rise inevitably to discontent, loss of interest in work, clashes between employer and employee, and the trade union. Those having the direction of the industrial system, now grown to vast proportions, recognized in a vague way that something was wrong. The more enlightened employer began to assume a paternalistic attitude towards the worker. Elabo-

[1] Hobson, *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, p. 412.

rate systems of welfare work were devised and with the best of intentions. Too often, however, the well-meaning employer found to his discouragement and disgust that the worker merely used this improvement of his position to stage the inevitable strike. Labor turnover, the indisputable sign of industrial maladjustment, grew until it amounted in some cases to 600 percent yearly. Under the leadership of men like Mr. Ford this labor turnover was reduced by a system of bonuses and profit-sharing. But this was met with the difficulties due to competition and the handicap of the smaller as opposed to the larger firms. It was found also that reducing the labor turnover does not necessarily increase the output. Finally came the scientific manager. He sought to subject the whole problem to expert analysis. The worker's every movement was studied, as though he were in a psychological laboratory, to eliminate waste of time and energy. Much valuable knowledge was in this way accumulated. But the worker was singularly indifferent at first and later developed a distinct antipathy to having a stop-watch held over him. The scientific employment expert, in spite of his valuable contributions to certain phases of the problem, has not solved it. From the nature of the case he could not solve it since he approached his problem from the standpoint of increasing the efficiency of the worker, not so much in the interest of the worker as in the interest of greater output and the ultimate attainment of the end of all business enterprise, namely, profits. The problem can never be solved without some appreciation of the disciplinary effect of the machine process upon the instinctive equipment and the moral character of the worker himself.

§ 2. The Machine Process and the Instincts

An understanding of the cultural significance of the machine process for the character of the worker must keep in mind the philosophy of the machine as outlined in the preceding chapter. It was found that the outstanding trait of the machine is its tendency to standardize. Because it en-

forces exact mechanical measurements and units in every phase of life the machine encourages an impersonal, non-moral, materialistic, sceptical, and undevout frame of mind wherever it is permitted to dominate. We have now to examine the effect of this mechanical standardization upon the human material in the machine industries.

It is of course obvious that in no mechanical occupation, even the most exacting, does the machine ever completely dominate the worker. For he will still remain human in that there will always be present aptitudes, temperamental traits, beliefs, and "sets" of the emotional life carried over from other fields of experience that will effectively resist the mechanizing effect of his work. Furthermore, just as in the old days of the handicraftsman with his tool, the worker will always stand above and superior to his machine. He must start and stop it, correct its defects, mend its broken parts. In the case of the more intelligent worker improvements may be suggested in its structure and working. But there is a fundamental difference between the worker of to-day and that of the days of the handicrafts. The worker to-day is only part of a comprehensive mechanical process, the purpose and methods of which set metes and bounds to his actions. No act of his, however intelligent, but must find its place in this predetermined scheme. The individual manipulator of a machine in a great shoe factory is at the mercy of the general process of which he and his particular machine are merely parts. The general process actually standardizes and delimits his thought. His ideas must fall within the fixed mechanical units of grade, weight, size, demanded by the machine process. The intelligence of the worker is not necessarily lowered or dwarfed by the machine. It is, however, very definitely limited to quantitative terms that make for mechanical efficiency. His thinking must center around the fundamental principle of the machine, namely, a causal sequence that lends itself to exact units of measurement. These observations will be abundantly verified in any standard work on industrial management.

"The great problem of a manager in any place", writes Duncan, "is to introduce machinery and so to arrange the work that the unskilled worker will be unnecessary and the call for the highly skilled man will be small".[1] The unskilled worker is unprofitable because his work is exhausting and monotonous and the type of work does not justify giving a wage that will attract alert men. He realizes, furthermore, that to lose his job is no great disaster since he can easily find another as good. The skilled laborer is undesirable "not because his services are not valuable but because so much depends on him". He is independent, hard to get and not easy to manipulate. Hence, of the three types, unskilled, mediocre, and skilled workers, the mediocre type is preferred for the following reason: only a short apprenticeship is necessary to make him available; the training his employer has given him makes him feel his dependence; by specializing in one thing he heightens his efficiency and "is thus able to turn out a larger product"; being a man of mediocre talents he is less ambitious and hence less liable to become discontented with his lot. The machine thus places a premium upon mediocrity and uniformity because from its very nature it must standardize the human element. Standardization means economy and profits, and profits is the end of the business enterprise which the machine process serves.

What is the effect of the standardization demanded by the machine upon the instincts of the worker? Consider the instinct of self-assertion, the impulse to stand out from the group, to live one's own life. This is basic in the development of personality. It is obvious that insistence upon uniformity and the constant approximation of the individual worker to the demands of an impersonal mechanical process tend to repress and impoverish this instinct. The adventurous and dramatic career of the entrepreneur or the "captain of industry", with his almost unlimited opportunities for the development of the instinct of self-assertion, is denied the humble worker. The daring strokes of the man of big busi-

[1] *The Principles of Industrial Management*, p. 206.

ness that dazzle the world are as a rule only possible because he stands upon the shoulders of thousands of standardized workers. Their freedom is the price society pays for his adventurousness.

Closely associated with the instinct of self-assertion is the instinct of self-repression. It plays a most powerful rôle in the shaping of character. Because of it men are born with a tendency to bow before whatever wins their admiration or meets the need for authority. It is closely associated with reverence which lies at the heart of religion. It assures obedience to law, the preservation of custom and tradition. Upon it rests to a large extent the institutional life of society. The machine process finds that this instinct tends to further its ends. For the effort to standardize obviously finds a ready ally in the instinctive impulse to submit to authority. One can be easily drilled into dependence upon a fixed rule of thumb. The referring of responsibility to those higher up easily becomes a matter of second nature. Furthermore, fear of losing a job and of being thrown back upon insufficient resources for support is always more or less present, especially among non-union workers. The tragic effect of fear upon personality is all too familiar. It encourages a subservient or else a suspicious and embittered mental attitude that effectually prevents the worker from bringing to the service of the community the full and glad and free expenditure of his best energies. The problem is still further complicated by other factors in the worker's life. He belongs to a class whose physical energies are subjected day after day to an exhaustive drain. At the close of the day or the week he has little energy or interest for grappling with the problems that concern his group. For it is a tragic fact that the group suffering the most seldom makes the most vigorous fight for its rights. The mass of peasantry wandering like dumb cattle over the fields of France suffered far worse than the *tiers état* of the towns and cities but it was this latter class that initiated the new order. It would seem that a certain amount of surplus energy and a measure of economic independence is necessary

to the sane and healthful self-assertion without which no group can maintain its rights in the community.

Of fundamental importance is the effect of the machine process upon the instinct of acquisitiveness that underlies the institution of property. The impulse to accumulate is shared by man with the animals; it is seen in the squirrel, in the ant and in the bee. The virtues of thrift and providence that spring from this instinct have doubtless been emphasized by the demands of cold and inhospitable climates. There is no reason to assume, however, that after the necessities of life have been met and a decent standard of life assured that the average man is naturally inclined to find his chief end in the amassing of possessions. The exaggerated gratification of this instinct of acquisitiveness, which more than anything else has contributed to the materialistic tinge of modern life, is due mainly to the effect of the machine process. Machine production has increased to a fabulous extent the power to own things. It has provided, especially for the entrepreneur, unlimited opportunities for easy accumulation of a mass of goods. Hence, machine production tends to obscure the joy of creative effort and to fix the attention upon the possibilities for possession. This instinctive desire to possess finds ready affiliation with other instincts such as rivalry and those powerful predatory impulses that prompt the hunter and the sportsman. The cheapest way to get possession of things is by capture, the way of the hunter. Hence, by a curious evolution business enterprise becomes a struggle for ownership in which the object is to invest as little capital or expend as little energy as possible and at the same time to capture the largest returns. The result is that the intention of worker as well as of business man is not so much the creation as the exploitation of wealth. To get something *cheap,* that is, with as little expenditure of time, energy or money as possible, comes very near being the dominating *motif* in the industrial world.

The industrial worker, dominated as he is by the fixed and limited status assigned to him in the social order by the machine process, is by no means so fortunate as the entrepreneur

in his ability to gratify the instinct of ownership. "The ordinary manual worker lives in a hired tenement of two to five rooms which he pays for by the week and from which he may be evicted at short notice. . . . If in addition the worker happens to live in a 'company house' or in a 'company town' his sense of empty-handed impotence is intensified manifold. 'Home' has in this event little permanence or emotional meaning. The landlord employer owns the employee's job, his house, perhaps his church, the streets and the school where his children are being educated. What of stability, security, tranquil 'at-homeness' can the tenant wage-earner feel as he smokes his pipe on the hired front door steps which overlook the mill?"[1] The suppression of this deep-seated property instinct is unfortunate for all concerned for upon it depends to a large extent civic spirit, patriotism and regard for law and order. Where it is lacking the individual becomes the easy victim of anti-social suggestions, class prejudice, and corruption.

In spite of its inhospitable environment, however, the property instinct still asserts itself in the worker, though often in curiously distorted fashion. The mill-worker soon comes to feel that he "owns" his machine. The unionized worker resists bitterly the attempt to take away his "job" and give it to the "scab". He has put into it his best energies, perhaps he has created it with his methods and traditions. On the other hand, the mill-owner feels that the entire plant is his. He considers that not only the material equipment but the time and energy of the men are his to dispose of as he wishes. The legalized and traditional conception of ownership is of course with the mill-owner. When the worker's more or less extra-legal sense of ownership is thwarted and defeated it may manifest itself in perverted fashion through *sabotage* or in strikes.

In general, the present structure of the machine process seems to repress those instincts that look to creative self-assertion on the part of the worker and to encourage those

[1] Ordway Tead, *Instincts in Industry, p. 77.*

that lend themselves to standardization and the submission to authority. The worker is made to feel that the industrial order, as it is at present, makes use of the machine process merely to exploit his labor in the interest of profits. But the real problem lies deeper. The machine process has done more than make possible the exploitation of the worker; its effect at present is sternly to discount his personal worth, his intellectual and moral capacities, by cutting him off from opportunities for creative self-expression and the demonstration of his social worth. This is strikingly illustrated in the separation of craft knowledge from craft skill that is rapidly going on under the machine process. Standardization of tools, materials, process, and product now dominate wherever there is machine production on a large scale. It is heightened by the application of scientific management. Heretofore there has still remained to the worker a small store of craft knowledge. This is now being gathered, systematized and doled out by the scientific expert to the worker. When this process of monopolizing and standardizing his special knowledge has been completed, the last vestige of creativity will disappear and the worker will approximate Aristotle's definition of a slave, namely, "an animated tool".

Under the machine process as at present constituted, therefore, many of the worker's instincts do not function normally and naturally with the full sanction of law and public sentiment but often in direct opposition to traditional conceptions. These instincts are deeply human; they can not be suppressed without creating discontent, unrest, and sometimes disaster. The problem, then, is whether business with its background of ownership based upon contract, status and tradition rather than actual creative work can always ignore and trample under foot these instincts so intimately connected with the welfare of society. It is not a question of socialism, profit-sharing, representation of workers in business administration or the disposal of the products of labor. These are possible remedies. The essential problem is one of human nature. Society seems faced with the rather uncomfortable alterna-

tives of pronouncing these natural and inevitable expressions of the acquisitive and other instincts by the worker in the status fixed for him by the machine process as wrong or of modifying the law and the cultural incidence of the machine process so that they do not conflict with the demands of these instincts.

The maladjustments which we have found to exist between the machine process and the instincts of the industrial worker are not without their parallels in society at large. For, as we have seen, the machine process touches the life of every individual worker more or less. It is to be expected that the complexity, the lateness of origin, the experimental nature and the consequent artificial nature of our industrial society should exhibit maladjustments. To be sure, they are partly offset by the great plasticity of man's instincts. There must be, however, at least a measure of correspondence between these instincts and their environment. Many students of the Great Society, created by the machine, assert that the correspondence between instincts and environment has been disturbed to such an extent as to threaten the sanity of society itself. Mr. Graham Wallas thus describes the people massed in an industrial and urban center of England. "The people around are from all ages from infancy to dotage; and you can see what it is that here stimulates the instincts which one by one appear in the growth of a human being. The babies are tugging at dirty india-rubber teats. The sweet shops are selling hundredweights of bright colored stuff which excites the appetite of the children without nourishing their bodies. That pale faced boy first knew love, not when he looked at a girl whom later he might marry, but when a dirty picture postcard caught his eye or he watched a suggestive film. His dreams of heroism are satisfied with halfpenny romances, half criminal and half absurd. Loyalty and comradeship mean sticking to his street gang; and the joy of constructive work means the money he can get for riding behind a van or running messages".[1]

[1] *The Great Society*, p. 62 f.

Our machine-made society seems to stimulate some instincts overmuch while it crushes or distorts others. The gregarious instinct, for example, was undoubtedly most useful in the earlier stages of human evolution. It served to hold together scattered populations. Without it the horde, the tribe, the state would hardly have been possible. The great increase of population, however, and the herding together in cities has stimulated the gregarious impulse to such an extent that the moral integrity of society is often menaced, as in the mob, by its power. Again the acquisitive instinct, the potentialities for the gratification of which have been increased to a marvelous degree by the machine process, has been emphasized to such an extent that it has become in the form of profitism the very driving force of business enterprise. While the machine process has harnessed acquisitiveness, pugnacity, self-abasement and other instincts, it has left the powerful instinct of sex to trail like a wild flower where it will. It was inevitable, therefore, that it should become the prey to commercialism. Trained as we are to measure things in terms of the ethics of business enterprise this seemed entirely proper. Why should not profitism squeeze the last farthing from long suffering human nature even though in so doing it must poison one of the most precious fountains of all social good? Jane Addams well says that we can not expect young people adrift in a social order ruled by the technology of the machine and urged on by profits to "understand the emotional force which seizes them and which, when it does not find the traditional line of domesticity, serves as a cancer in the very tissues of society and as a disrupter of the securist social bonds".[1]

Happiness, according to Aristotle, is "an exercise of the vital faculties in accordance with their perfect virtue or excellence." No mechanical structure of society, therefore, that ignores man's instinctive equipment can ever assure him happiness. Such structure must be more or less the objectification of man's "vital faculties," the convenient and effective physical instruments of human needs. Just as the bloom on

[1] *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, p. 15.

the athlete's cheek, to use one of Aristotle's illustrations, indicates a harmony of forces in his body, so contentment in the social order indicates a happy balance between the fixed instinctive heritage of man and the environment. The machine is the servant, not the master, of man's "vital faculties." Where permanent and ineradicable conflict arises between man's instinctive equipment and the machine process, the latter must yield. This enables us to state the problem so far as man's instincts are concerned. It is the problem of altering the machine process so that it neither represses nor overstimulates these instincts but serves as the efficient and necessary instrument for organizing them into the highest type of character.

§ 3. The Machine Process and the Labor Union

It is in the opposition of labor to scientific management that the real issue at stake between the worker and the machine process emerges most clearly. We have seen that scientific management as represented by Taylor is a curious mixture of idealism with the last refinement of the machine philosophy. Social service and humanitarianism are blended with the absolutism of natural laws beyond the power of man to change. Social justice is merely a matter of the impartial application of these laws after they have been scientifically determined through time and motion studies. Efficiency and increased production sought by scientific management are conceded by all to be most desirable; upon them will rest in increasing measure the happiness and welfare of future generations. It is, therefore, discouraging to find labor almost uniformly opposed to scientific management. Unionism has for this reason been criticized as opposed to social progress. It is asserted that the union is prompted solely by narrow selfish interests.

On the face of things it would appear that the union is patterned after business organization. It is a monopoly of a commodity, labor, and those having it for sale unite to control the price of their commodity and to increase their bargaining

power. Furthermore, the average worker does not appreciate or understand scientific management; his leaders oppose for political reasons the sympathetic cooperation between worker and employer that it demands; from sad experience the worker has been taught to distrust every move of the employer; he fears the Greeks even when bearing gifts. Finally, Taylor contends that scientific management, based upon a harmony of interests between employer and employe, is organized for peace while the union is organized for war to limit output in the interest of the worker. Granting, as in all probability we should, that there is an element of truth in all these factors, the real issue must still be sought in something more fundamental. It is nothing less than the essential incompatibility between the philosophy of the machine and the ends sought in organized labor. In the analysis of the philosophy of the machine it was found that the machine process exerts a disintegrating and iconoclastic influence upon the bonds that make group life possible. Scientific management is not possible, at least in the sense contemplated by Taylor, without entire freedom to change industrial conditions wherever and whenever newer and more efficient methods and processes in production have been discovered. This places the status of the worker, his wage, his job, his group ideals and his standard of living, completely at the mercy of every mechanical invention or every improvement in method. He becomes merely a human atom, embodying a certain amount of physical energy, which must be fitted into the arbitrary and mechanical demands of the machine process in order to secure through faithful obedience to the laws of physical force the largest production of goods. This is equivalent to asking the worker to sacrifice his group values in order that society may have more goods.

The issue here raised is one of fundamental importance. It is nothing more nor less than a clash between two phases of reality, two measures of values, that of the machine and of the group conscience. The machine process as interpreted in scientific management functions at the level of certain fixed

laws of nature such as causation. The expert is constantly studying these laws through time and motion experimentation. As new tasks, methods, variation in individual skill or what-not are discovered, the worker is shifted from task to task, from group to group, paid more or less, promoted or discharged according as the economy of these mechanical laws demands for the furthering of the greatest productive possibilities. These shifts of the worker, in order to secure the end sought, must not be disturbed by those thousand and one ties that bind him to his fellows and make him a normally responsible being. They must be allowed to go on and on in their impersonal, unmoral and mechanical pursuit of efficiency. If we deprive scientific management of this supreme right it must abdicate its claim of superiority over the old "initiative and incentive" method. It is then placed at the mercy of human wills and inclinations. To be sure, it will be brought into the field of morals but at the sacrifice of its absolute ideal of mechanical efficiency.

The worker, on the other hand, belongs not only to this level of mechanical law that governs the machine; he knows the love of father and mother, of wife and child; he belongs perhaps to a lodge or a church and experiences the helpfulness of friends; he is a citizen and interested in the fate of democracy; he may have larger cultural interests. The union is the instrument by which these social interests with all that they mean for mental and moral development, for social worth and self-respect, are assured at least a measure of permanence. Across this precious fabric of human values that we sum up under the vague term 'status' the philosophy of the machine, with its impersonal and unmoral effort after productive efficiency, cuts its way with ruthless disregard for the moral chaos it creates. From the standpoint of its philosophy it can consistently say, "None of these things moves me." Against the insidious attacks of the machine process the worker erects the barriers of the closed shop, collective bargaining, and, as a last resort, the strike. For he realizes that when once the philosophy of the machine and profitism are allowed complete

sway in the prosecution and application of time and motion studies or otherwise he must surrender all claims to an independent, influential and self-respecting position in the community; social justice and industrial democracy become little more than an iridescent dream.

The struggle that labor is making, therefore, is for a social status that is not at the mercy of the machine process with its mechanical standardizations. Labor, to be sure, is far from being a distinct functional group with a common body of ethical forms that are accepted by all. There is the greatest variety of workers with diverse ethical codes and with points of conflict as well as of agreement. In fact the great handicap of labor as contrasted with capital is that the latter, thanks to the impersonal and unmoral logic of the machine process, secures the close coordination of interests and the effective prosecution of common ends, whereas among the laboring groups the presence everywhere of the human element makes for diversity and prevents effective coöperation. This wealth of human interests, however, which seems such a sore handicap in the fight for recognition, is in reality labor's great asset. It keeps the spirit of the labor movement in touch with democracy. Where labor is thoroughly organized and socially self-conscious, therefore, as in the England of today, it is no accident that we find it putting into its program the most advanced democratic principles.

It goes without saying that industrial democracy, which seems the only solution of the eternal quarrel between capital and labor, will never come until both have attained a common social point of view, a common body of norms, in terms of which they are willing to adjudicate their differences. It goes without saying, furthermore, that labor will never accept the materialistic philosophy of Mr. Taylor and of other exponents of scientific management according to which labor and capital are to adjust their differences on the basis of a great code of natural and unalterable laws superior to the caprice of human wills. Labor is too passionately human to submit its fate to such tragic metaphysical nonsense. Finally, labor

is in thorough revolt against the economic absolutism of Adam Smith and natural rights, according to which an "invisible hand" prevents the economic atomism of self-interest, entire freedom of contract and unrestricted competition from disintegrating the business world.

In a democracy genuine solidarity of sentiment must come as the product of human wills. If worker and employer ever arrive at a permanent peace it will be through the free and enlightened acceptance of a body of comprehensive norms of human welfare. In a democracy it can not be otherwise, for, as we have had occasion to state repeatedly, the social conscience is only authoritative for free men when it becomes the law that they themselves have accepted for the guidance of their actions. Evidence is not lacking that over and above the two groups of capital and labor eternally pitted against each other, a third group with a more or less unbiased viewpoint is taking shape. This group may form the basis for a body of authoritative sentiment, an enlightened public sentiment, that will not only mediate between the contending parties but will also educate them in time into an appreciation of their common interests. This disinterested element is at present loosely coordinated and lacking in the proper machinery for the expression of its will but it is growing in power and insight.

§ 4. The Law, the Worker and the Machine Process

Most important from the standpoint of ethics is the attitude that has been encouraged in the mind of the worker, by the discipline of the machine process and the Great Society, towards some of the traditional norms of the law and the social conscience. As has been suggested in an earlier chapter, the present generation is dependent for the solution of its problems upon the accumulated and tested moral experience of the past. This past experience finds its authoritative embodiment in the social conscience and still more exactly in the law. For the settlement of the vexed questions relating to property,

contract, labor and capital, therefore, the community must fall back upon these earlier norms.

An authoritative traditional body of norms *is* deeply ingrained in our national life. In our federal and state constitutions, in the common law as well as in the conventional ethics of business, lies embedded the idea of a fixed and unalterable body of rights as to private property, freedom of contract and of competition, all rooted in an indefectible order of nature. The function of the law and of government is merely to preserve intact these rights; when any piece of legislation violates them it is pronounced unconstitutional. This scheme of natural rights became firmly lodged in the moral common sense of English-speaking peoples during the eighteenth century whence it was absorbed by the common law. These rights expressed the viewpoint for the most of the vigorous middle class Englishmen living under the old domestic economy. In this pre-capitalistic and loose-jointed society much depended upon freedom of individual initiative and personal efficiency. Individual merchants and employers of labor were upon a more or less equal footing and even the worker was free from many of the limitations of the era of the machine. Under these conditions freedom of contract and of competition and the inviolability of private property were in harmony with the needs of the existing social order. The ethics of *laissez faire* made for progess.

This philosophy of *laissez faire* had hardly received general acceptance in England when new forces, destined ultimately to culminate in the Great Society of to-day, were liberated by the industrial revolution. On the other hand, the *laissez faire* philosophy with its natural rights dogma enjoyed in America a longer sway than in England since the machine process with its new technology can hardly be said to have affected this country greatly until after the Civil War. The doctrine of natural liberty is therefore more deeply ingrained in American institutions. But to-day some of the most advanced forms of the Great Society with its machine technology

are to be found in this country. The result is that eighteenth century ideas exist side by side with a complete transformation in the relations of employer and employee, in the rôle played by capital and in the entire structure of the industrial order.

Consider, for example, the right of freedom of contract. The common law and the norms of business ethic insist upon entire freedom of contract between man and man. The extreme specialization produced by the machine process, however, makes a workman's livelihood depend upon some one job. The coercion of the standardized industrial order forces him to contract for that job or go without work. This coercion in no way violates the law. It is not assault and battery; the inalienable right to contract for the job or not to contract for it is not touched. The case lies outside the law because the law is individualistic and does not contemplate the possibilities of restricting freedom in our modern highly mutualized society. The worker, sensible of his helplessness before the large-scale business of the machine process, combines with his fellows and seeks to bargain collectively for better hours and wages. The union is, as a matter of fact, an effort on the part of the worker to restore the freedom and equality of bargaining power which has been endangered through the vastly increased bargaining power of the large-scale employer. But here arises at once a conflict between the inalienable natural right of each, whether employer or employee, to contract when and how and where he pleases, and the attempt of the union to abridge that right. The reason for this is clear. The norms underlying the law are derived from an individualistic society. This is indicated by the language of the *Final Report of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations* for 1915, pp. 372f,: "It should be remembered that in the eyes of the law the labor contract is an individual contract—a contract between an individual workman and an individual employer. Even if the employer is a corporation of thousands of stockholders and bondholders, they are treated as a single individual for the purpose of a contract. But the law does not usually recognize

a collective or joint agreement between a union and an employer or employers' association, as a contract. The courts will not usually enforce it as they enforce individual contracts. Such a contract, so called, will not bind anybody by the force of law. A contract with a trade union is not a contract in law—it is merely an understanding, or a usage, or a joint agreement, that, when the real labor contract is made between individual employer and employee, it will be made according to the terms of the joint agreement. If an individual employer breaks the agreement by hiring a workman on different terms, the only means that the union has of enforcing the agreement is that of a strike. It is not a breach of contract. The union can not usually get an injunction or damages in court on account of the violation." To depart from the individualistic point of view would be equivalent to subverting the entire spirit and philosophy of our existing body of law. In the interest of consistency and of rational procedure those entrusted with the interpretation of the law must be true to these traditions. "Until individualism shall cease to be the predominant theory, the courts will continue to hold unionizing wrong. Unionizing will not become legal unless the arguments for collectivism shall ever command the adherence of the great majority of men. If that time comes, the law, it seems, must regulate the admission to the unions to which it would thus concede the control of the labor market. For regulation, as we shall see throughout this discussion, is the only basis upon which monopoly can be permitted. If, finally, the law should concede the closed shop, it very probably will require an open union".[1]

As a result, therefore, of the conditions created by the Great Society we have this rather interesting situation. The legal and ethical norms society must apply to industrial problems reflect the individualistic relations of handicraft industry during the eighteenth century and do not provide positive and constructive means for settling difficulties. The influence of the law is mainly negative and prohibitory through injunc-

[1] Bruce Wyman, *Control of the Market*, p. 86.

tions. But the law is not in the position actually to ignore the changed conditions. The forces of the changing social order are in the end stronger than the logical absolutism of the law, for, as Mr. Justice Holmes has well said, "The life of the law has not been logic: it has been experience." But being unable to shake itself free from its earlier static and preevolutionary point of view the law is forced to secure justice by ways that are often round about and disingenuous, reflecting the varying opinions of judges and even of different sections of the country. Thus the limitations of freedom of contract found in the legislation as to wages, hours, conditions of work, guarding of machinery and the employment of women and children tacitly recognizes the vast inequality between the large-scale employer and the average employee in his ability to accept or reject conditions of employment.[1] These limitations of the right of freedom of contract are justified, to be sure, as exercises of the police power or the right of legislatures to interfere with contractual relations in the interest of public welfare, namely, the health, morals, or safety of life and limb of their citizens. But in spite of these practical invalidations of freedom of contract in the interest of public welfare the law still clings in theory to the old absolute individualistic traditions of natural liberty though in so doing it is guilty of something that looks suspiciously like self-stultification.

The law, being in spirit individualistic and inclined to see in freedom of contract the Urim and Thummim of ultimate justice and right, finds itself unable, therefore, to understand, much less to sympathize with, the point of view of the unions. For the unions are here primarily to restrict this old individualism and absolute freedom of contract. From the standpoint of common law, therefore, the unions are essentially illegal. Their very existence is a challenge to the spirit and intent of the law. It should be remembered, therefore, that the attitude of the courts towards labor is not necessarily born of animosity for the worker and the determination to keep him

[1] See L. D. Clark, *The Law of the Employment of Labor*, pp. 6 f., for cases in point.

in subjection. Even the judge who is perhaps sympathetic with unionism is not in the position, as the sworn and faithful interpreter of the law, to do otherwise than condemn it. Unfortunately the average unionist does not have this deeper insight into the situation, and his baffled sense of justice and group aspirations find expression in the brutal ejaculation, "To hell with the courts".[1]

It is apparent, therefore, that the problem is one of moral maladjustment at the level of the social conscience and those basic norms of justice that underlie the law. The vast and complex system of combination and standardization introduced by the machine into every phase of modern industry with the complete alteration of the status of the worker finds little recognition in the law and traditional ethical norms. That is to say, the problems of employer and employee due to the rise of large-scale business are not contemplated by the laws and the norms that are supposed to regulate such things. The new social order does not fit into the old philosophy of natural rights. The problems of the new order exist *de facto;* they do not exist *de jure*. Looked at from the point of view of the law and traditional ethics, the actual difficulties are non-existent. Looked at from the point of view of the changing social order that has given rise to these modern problems we may say that social evolution has invalidated the old norms. But to invalidate standards of right is to cause moral uncertainty and distrust. Hence, it may be said that the machine process has encouraged, especially in the minds of the workers who feel most keenly the lack of moral adjustment, a sceptical attitude towards traditional legal and ethical norms in industrial and business relations. By being forced to live day after day in situations in which his moral sense is stultified and outraged by the impotence and indifference of law and conventional ethical standards the worker comes to discredit them entirely. Here, if anywhere, we are to find the explanation of the constant appeal to the strike.

[1] Taken from trade union literature by Hoxie, *Trade Unionism in the United States,* p. 405.

In this connection a comparison of the attitude of the worker towards the machine process with that of the business man will prove most illuminating. The business man accepts the traditional norms of the law and of conventional ethics as to these natural rights. Hence, from his point of view, government exists mainly to preserve these rights inviolate. Wherever there is a combination either of workers or of other business men that disturbs the free play of these rights of property or of contract we have a condition that is abnormal, dangerous and contrary to nature. Where these rights are maintained in their original integrity we shall always have social justice and a harmony of all the interests of society. When a union tries to enforce collective bargaining it violates the fundamental rights of the individual worker or the individual employer to freedom of contract. This creates social conflict, business losses and an unnatural social situation. When these rights are threatened appeal is taken to the courts for their protection. The existing law and its interpreters, the judges, draw their authority from the common law that embodies the social common sense of the eighteenth century when these ideas of unalterable and inalienable natural rights were the accepted political and economic philosophy. It is in terms of this background of the common law that the business man does his thinking and to it he appeals in the defense of his rights.

But the business man is also a staunch believer in the machine process. It has created modern capitalism. It has made possible the rise of the stupendous fabric of "big business." It is a most effective instrument for the accumulation of profits. Without it the dazzling strokes of business enterprise would be impossible. We have seen, however, that the philosophy of the machine process carries with it implications that are undermining the old natural rights doctrines as to property, freedom of contract and the like. The Great Society created by the machine has given rise to a new and evolutionary conception of life totally opposed to the old static doctrines of natural rights embodied in law and appealed to

by the business man in defense of his rights. The business man of the conservative type is, therefore, in an uncomfortable predicament. He must have the old doctrines of rights to keep his position of vantage and of power in the economic system, yet he is doing all in his power to encourage the machine process which is rendering these rights meaningless and downright anti-social. Thus the reactionary employer of labor condemns in his workers a mental attitude he think dangerous and subversive of property interests while he continually forces upon his workers a way of life that inevitably educates them into this attitude. To say the least, such a course on the part of those in positions of power in the business world is hardly logical. Not all the confusion, not to say moral anarchy, found in the industrial world to-day is to be laid at the door of socialists or radical labor agitators. The most dangerous moral anarchist of all is the unenlightened, powerful and stubborn reactionary.

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CHAPTER XX

THE ETHICS OF BUSINESS ENTERPRISE.

§ 1. Business and Morals

Much could be said for business as a means of moral discipline. There is a certain irreducible minimum of morality which business must have to exist. Morality is little more than the attempt to rationalize the principles that underlie sane and healthful human relations. Hence honesty between man and man is a prerequisite to the effectiveness and persistence of the economic order. Furthermore, industrialism has laid the basis, broad and secure, for the material welfare of man, assuring to him easy access to the fundamental necessities of life. This enduring material foundation is necessary if the superstructure of moral and spiritual values is to endure. Finally, the growing sense of social solidarity, due to the unprecedented mutualization of our modern life, has brought the individual into contact with his fellows as never before, thus enriching the moral experience. Through the Great Society created mainly through trade, morality has taken on the international note. Men are beginning to realize, thanks to business enterprise, the ethical implications of the dictum, "Ye are all members one of another." The question, however, may be asked what are the distinctive contributions of business to moral experience? Can we point to virtues that owe their importance mainly to the exigencies of the business order?

In an earlier chapter the principle was laid down that the types of virtue stressed at a given stage of social evolution will be intimately related to the prevailing social discipline at that stage. If this be true we may expect the natural history of morals to reflect the gradual transition from the simple industrial situations of the middle ages to the modern period of

commerce and business enterprise. This we find to be the case. Under the stress of business development we detect a tendency to shift the position of the virtues. This is strikingly illustrated in the case of the virtue of veracity. For it is obvious that as men become more and more interdependent through trade they are forced to rely upon the fidelity of their fellows. Veracity, therefore, with the related virtues of honesty, trustworthiness, fidelity and the like, tends to take precedence in the modern business world over such virtues as humility, so prized in the middle ages, or the militant virtues of courage and honor. Lecky indeed asserts, "The promotion of industrial veracity is probably the single form in which the growth of manufactures exercises a favorable influence upon morals." It is probable, however, that in at least two other respects business has enriched the moral life, namely, in connection with the emphasis of thrift and business enterprise. Thrift is the fruitful source of those excellencies of character we associate with industry, self-restraint, order and sobriety. Business enterprise gives rise to the more spectacular but usually more dubious qualities of the speculator and the "captain of industry." Business success requires a combination of imaginative power in the grasp of the complex industrial situation, insight and judgment in the evaluation of men and things, courage and persistence in the carrying out of ideas, and executive ability along administrative lines.

It would be idle to deny that business plays an influential rôle in the shaping of our ethical ideals. Much can be said for the contention that in so far as the American people have any concrete embodiment for their national ideals it is found in the successful business man. In every campaign, whether for the presidency of the nation or for the mayorality of an obscure town, the highest recommendation of the candidate is that he proposes to give a "business administration." The politician, whether on the floor of Congress or at the hustings before his own people, knows no higher standard of values than "business prosperity." The scientist who receives the plaudits of the masses is one whose researches result in im-

mediate and palpable improvements in "business efficiency." The deadliest criticism that can be levelled against any movement, whether for moral, educational, economic or aesthetic betterment, is that it will "injure business." The greatest compliment that can be paid to a hospital, a musical conservatory, a lunatic asylum or a university is that it is "run on a business basis." A church is congratulated when it successfully adopts the methods of business, though it never occurs to anyone to sympathize with business over its apparent inability to find a place for the ethics of the pulpit.

§ 2. The Entrepreneur

There is of course the greatest variety in our complex modern business world. Examination will show, however, that there is a certain type of business man, the entrepreneur, who occupies a central position. Standing as he does between land, labor, and capital on the one hand and the finished products and the consumer on the other, his rôle in the economic order is paramount. He is the general who commands on the industrial battlefield. Through his leadership new fields are opened for the employment of idle capital and labor. The entrepreneur takes precedence over the technical expert such as mining engineer or industrial chemist, the so-called "efficiency experts." These men, to be sure, perform a most important work and have, as a rule, command of scientific knowledge as well as a sense of social responsibility and class ethics. They have made possible the marvellous technical efficiency of factory and mill. But above them stands the entrepreneur whose goal is not economy and efficiency in solving the technical problems of production but skill in making money. The plans of the technical expert must in every case wait upon the pronouncement of the managing capitalist as to whether they will pay. The complications of the present business order have placed technical expert, investor, employer of labor as well as consumer at the mercy of the entrepreneur. From him comes the creative *élan* of business enterprise. His spirit permeates the entire business world; men take from him their

standards of business ethics. This holds true not only of "big business" but even of the obscure and conventional members of the business community. For the average man the successful entrepreneur possesses something of the glamour with which every age surrounds its dominant group. The "captains of industry" once occupied a place in the popular imagination similar to that enjoyed by the Knights of the Round Table in the Arthurian legends. They were the uncrowned kings of a new order and being kings they could do no wrong.

Notwithstanding the favored and influential position once occupied by the entrepreneur in the business world there is evidence that he has not met his responsibilities and as a result is losing the confidence and sympathy of the public. "Steeped in the operations of trading which have cultivated an entirely different attitude of mind from that induced by the tangible and definite operations of manufacturing and production, the man engaged in commerce has displayed little understanding of the viewpoint of these other departments, and has found it impossible either to sympathize with or appreciate the fundamental changes which have taken place therein".[1] The commercial man is keenly alert to new methods or machinery that may increase profits. He is, however, singularly ignorant in other ways. He fails to see that the work of the efficiency expert in the mill, the spread of education among the workers, the extension of the unions, the increase of knowledge and social self-consciousness among the masses of men have created a subtle transformation of public sentiment that is opposed in many ways to all those principles and practices that are dear to the heart of the old "captain of industry." As these forces begin to crystallize into opinions and laws, he feels in a vague, uneasy way that things are not as they once were; without trying to understand what it all means he is inclined to utter a vigorous howl of protest and to brand all who differ with him as radicals. This reactionary attitude but encourages the growing distrust, especially among the

[1] H. Tipper, *The New Business*, p. 365.

workers and the proletariat. They feel that the commercial trader has deprived the workers, those who perform the actual labor of production, of the legitimate rewards of their toil. They imagine that concealed behind the mysteries of the market the trader forces both worker and consumer to pay through their economies for unjust gains. The enterpreneur is coming to be identified with the profiteer.

For this unfortunate position the entrepreneur has only himself to blame. Secure in his position of power and of privilege and supported by law and the business traditions of freedom of enterprise and inviolable rights of contract and of property, he has treated this change of sentiment with indifference or scorn. He has not sought to educate the public as to the social significance of his place in the economic order. On the other hand, he has shrouded himself and all his doings in mystery; he has strenuously opposed investigations; he has held the public and even the government at arm's length. Too often he has prosecuted the game of business with the cunning and secrecy of the hunter who snares his victims or has boldly applied the tactics of war. The public is slowly coming to realize that in business, as in other matters of vital concern, society is best served when the game goes forward openly with all the cards on the table.

There is evidence, furthermore, that this traditional attitude of the entrepreneur is no longer possible. The rise of the corporation, the concentration of many business units under one head involving thousands of employees and stockholders and requiring exact tests of ability and carefully thought-out plans of development with corresponding exactitude in the apportionment of rewards, necessitates a type of business manager entirely different from the old individualistic, often anti-social "captain of industry." The entrepreneur of the future will be less and less a plunger, a Napoleon of high finance, and more and more a responsible and highly trained scientific manager with delegated authority. He must provide himself with efficiency experts who are masters of the physical sciences, with improved systems of cost account-

ing, with a knowledge of the psychological problems involved in the handling of the human material. The old careless, unrestricted days of the financial buccaneer are gone. The new industrial leadership must be actuated by a genuine spirit of social service.

Meanwhile those canons of success made famous by the "captains of industry" of the old type still remain with us. Their business philosophy has become ingrained in the very thought and life and traditions of the business world. The very fact that they were to all intents and purposes a law unto themselves has lent to their records a fascination and authoritativeness that only genius is able to inspire. Notwithstanding the beginnings of a new order that we can detect, the ethics of business enterprise still reflects the standards of an earlier individualistic age. It is still true that in business the pecuniary obligation is final, the pecuniary measure of values fundamental; the incentive of business enterprise still remains the desire for profits; the orthodox method of business procedure is still free competition, a principle opposed for the most part to the coöperation so basic in a democracy; the principle of unrestricted economic self-assertion is still invoked in irrational fashion with no thought-out goal of social welfare.

§ 3. The Dominance of the Pecuniary Standard

If anyone doubts the pervasive influence of the philosophy of business in American life let him investigate the extent to which pecuniary valuation prevails. Money is the one measure of value acknowledged by all Americans irrespective of social position, creed, race, or culture. In America as in no other land perhaps, thanks to the discipline of business enterprise, does the unsophisticated common sense of the masses yield such an unqualified assent to the pecuniary obligation. It is possible in America as in few other lands to discharge in a pecuniary way those varied duties that devolve upon the individual as a member of the social order. For the masses of Americans there is no spiritual or moral leader, no literary

or plastic artist, no scholar, scientist, or public official whose status in the community is not most speedily and intelligently determined in terms of money.

The machine process has played a most important rôle in the accentuation of money in American life. The machine has multiplied indefinitely the various ways in which human energies may find employment. Men work now not for food or clothing or shelter. The efforts of men are turned to the making of money rather than of the goods needed to sustain life, for once in the possession of money these goods can easily be obtained. The problem of the individual or of the family is not a matter of special skill or knowledge but a matter of the extent to which they have made themselves master of money-income. The fluctuations of the crops, the cycles of full and lean years in business, lack of employment or what not do not affect the status of the individual or the group who is in possession of an income. Work is done, goods are produced, service is performed, not because of their cultural or moral value but solely to assure through their production an adequate money-income. Natural wealth is left undeveloped, crops are neglected, and goods necessary for life are not produced if they do not bring income. Hence we get a curious situation in which " the elaborate cooperative process by which a nation's myriad workers provide for the meeting of each other's needs is thus brought into precarious dependence upon factors which have but a remote connection with the material conditions of well being—factors which determine the prospects of making money ".[1]

The dollar as the measure of values is still further strengthened by the dearth of social traditions and the other means of evaluation to be found in older and more stable societies with a more varied social organization. It is a familiar fact that in older sections even of American society, protected from the disintegrating effects of change, other standards such as birth, creed, culture, politics or character outweigh money. But these things go down before the great tide of industrialism.

[1] Mitchell, *Business Cycles*, pp. 21, 22.

The rapid transition from agricultural to industrial life, the sudden transformation of village into rambling manufacturing town, the herding of people in great urban centers where all home ties are lost, and withal the *Wanderleben* so characteristic of Americans disrupt all traditional standards and throw men back upon the dollar as the sole, universal and intelligible measure of values. "The identification of the individual with industrial establishment, with community, and with peculiar schemes of thinking and living has nothing in common save the blue sky above and the pecuniary income ahead. In view of the necessity of forming judgments within this chaotic society, it is inevitable that the dollar should become the arbiter of values".[1]

On the face of things this impersonal democracy of the dollar seems to strip society of all those warm and personal contacts through which characters are shaped, sympathies cultivated and all "the burden of the mystery of an unintelligible world" made tolerable. But this very impersonality of the money economy is not without its possible benefits. For by reducing relations to the objective, impersonal, pecuniary bond men gain greater possibilities of personal liberty. The property, for example, which under certain conditions may become restricting to individual freedom, can be condensed into money. The individual gains thereby freedom of movement; the income from rented property may enable him to live in a distant city or devote himself to scientific or scholarly pursuits. The very impersonality of the pecuniary standard permits of a vast variety of relations with the increased possibilities for the expansion of character. It requires, to be sure, great power of social imagination to see in this impersonal pecuniary freedom increased social responsibility or solidarity. But in reality the impersonal pecuniary tie should make for greater individualization together with an enlarged sense of social capacites and duties. For it is through the impersonal money-economy that socialization may take place in more compre-

[1] Hamilton, "The Price System and Social Policy", *The Journal of Political Economy,* Vol. XXVI, p. 52.

hensive and thorough fashion. The pecuniary bond might thus be made to serve the larger and more spiritual solidarity of men.

This dominance of the pecuniary standard has given rise to the charge that America is incurably materialistic and is best characterized as the land of the *Dollarjaeger*. The accusation is unjust. The present dominance of the pecuniary standard of values is due to the fact that money is not vigorously and effectively opposed by other standards. The pecuniary values were the first to find logical expression in our social order. They take precedence over all others, therefore, only in the sense that they have become more closely and rationally coördinated with the life of society as a whole. It is a familiar fact that the great moneyed interests of the nation, the trusts, first made effective headway against the rampant and wasteful individualism of the last century when Americans were busily engaged in the task of conquering a continent. The financiers and trust-organizers led the way in the work of social re-organization which resulted in what Graham Wallas has called " the Great Society " in which we now live. The moneyed interests, therefore, were first in the field. The rise of a plutocratic régime inevitably brought in its wake the emphasis of the pecuniary standard of values. There is every reason for believing, therefore, that the supremacy of the pecuniary economy is but a phase in the evolution of American life.

When the masses of Americans have been subjected to the disciplinary influence of a social order organized and inspired by higher values, it will then become possible to modify the present dominant money values. The scepticism of the average American as to the reform of commercialized politics, the elimination of graft from city government or profiteering from business, is not due to the fact that he has ceased to believe that " righteousness exalteth a nation." His scepticism is due to his feeling of impotence when faced with the alert and powerful organization of those interests in the community that represent pecuniary values only. The ordinary man accepts

the supremacy of money values, for the most part from the sheer force of circumstances. William James has said somewhere that we need only to assert constantly that a certain doctrine is true and good and act persistently upon that assumption to induce finally the firm conviction both of its truth and of its goodness. The ingrained effect of the habits of pecuniary valuation to which Americans have long been subjected will doubtless linger for years and condition our view of life.

Any attempt to better the situation must recognize the legitimate place of money. Money values serve to mediate or to generalize other values. Pecuniary values are, therefore, instrumental and secondary; they can never be made primary in any healthful and progressive social order. They stand lowest in the scale, below economic values and far below moral, esthetic and religious values. We shall not emancipate society from the present tyranny of money values by debasing them or placing them under a taboo. We should if anything make them more comprehensive. Reformer, scientist, artist, scholar and spiritual leader should be included in our scheme of monetary valuation but on a scale in proportion to their social significance. It is a curious fact that the skilled worker in the steel-mill commands more than the public school teacher. The hand guiding the lathe that shapes a fourteen inch shell is better paid than the hand that trains the future citizen. The skilled scientist of the pure research type can never command the salary of the commercial chemist. To be sure, we recognize that the enthusiasm of the searcher after pure scientific truth and the joy of the teacher over the mental development of a pupil are rewards too subtle and sacred to be measured in dollars and cents. But in the interest of pecuniary values themselves and in order to rescue them from the materialism and selfishness in which they too often grovel, we should utilize them more and more as instruments of social evaluation in the higher realm of the disinterested activities, such as science, education, and art. It is only by dignifying and humanizing pecuniary values that

we can ever hope to emancipate ourselves from their deadly tyranny.

§ 4. Profitism and the Profiteer

Most important in the ethics of business enterprise is the part played by profits.[1] If money provides the standard of measures it is profits that furnishes business with its incentive. Adam Smith's famous dictum, "The consideration of his own private profit is the sole motive which determines the owner of any capital," is still the theory of business enterprise. Whatever the variations due to the temper or training of the individual business man it still remains true that, as a rule, the effect his activity may have upon social welfare, as Smith says, "never enters his thoughts." In so far as business has any whole point of view it seems to be implied in the idea that competition, price, supply and demand, and the like are phases of inexorable economic laws which, like gravity, function absolutely independent of striving human wills or the ebb and flow of human happiness. How far such blank determinism is really believed by the man of business who talks of fixed economic laws and how far it is a convenient pretext for escaping the vast moral responsibilities the opposite point of view implies, may remain for the present an open question.

From the nature of the case profitism can not be a respecter of persons. The thousands employed in a great plant, from the office boy to the manager, are classified in terms of their earning capacity. The sentimentalist may lament the "mute inglorious Miltons" sacrificed to the god of gain, but profitism does not indulge in sentimental dreams. The man who inclines to be philanthropic or humanitarian, unless he has made good through strenuous devotion

[1] "Profits are to be understood as comprising merely that part of the business man's returns which he takes as the reward of his labor, and as insurance against the risks affecting his enterprise. Deduct from the business man's total income a sum which will cover interest on his capital at the prevailing rate and rent on his land, and you have left his income as business man, his profits."[1] (John A. Ryan, *Distributive Justice*, p. 239).

to the principles of profitism, is condemned from the standpoint of the ethics of business enterprise or is at least held under suspicion. The head of a large business concern, no matter how benevolent he may be at heart, dares not let these kindly impulses color to any great extent his business policy, for he is surrounded by shrewd competitors ready to take advantage of every weakening of his economic fighting strength. Furthermore, he is the representative of thousands of stockholders who do not understand his benevolent intentions but who do hold him responsible for returns on their investments. In the case of the retired millionaire, his philanthropic activities are from the point of view of business enterprise the rightful rewards of business success; his benefactions are in a way the justification for the prevailing business philosophy.

"The proximate aim of the business man", says Taussig, "is to make money. All is fish that comes into his net. Unless restrained by the law or public opinion or moral scruples, he will turn to anything that promises a handsome surplus over expenses".[1] It would seem, then, that the profiteer is an almost inevitable product of the present ethics of business enterprise. Certainly the profiteer is the most unlovely accompaniment of the present order and has done more than anything else to create distrust of business. The profiteer, to be sure, pays lip homage to justice and to those higher values that have found expression through science, education, religion, and art. But in reality he has no interest in these things except in so far as they serve his selfish ends. Science is free, critical, fearless, frank, forward-looking, unselfish. The atmosphere of the profiteer is militant, suspicious, secretive, selfish. The profiteer is effusive in his plaudits of the scientist who can unlock the secrets of nature and offer prospects of immediate pecuniary returns; he has small respect for the plodding but poverty-stricken searcher for abstract truth. Galileo, Newton, Liebig, Helmholtz, Kelvin, Jenner, Koch, Pasteur, Darwin, Fechner, and Roentgen lived in a world he can not understand. Where others have toiled in poverty of external

[1] *Principles of Economics,* Vol. II, p. 189.

circumstance but with divine enthusiasm for the truth and out of love for humanity, the profiteer is content to enter and reap the rich material harvest they had to forego or purposely scorned.

Perhaps the greatest menace of the profiteer to the higher life is that he is inclined to bring the standards of science and of education down to the level of the market place. The reviewer of a recent work upon the psychology of business efficiency writes, " The desire of the authors' hearts emerges in the later chapters, where we find psychology applied to the business man in office and workshop, in the selecting of employees, enticing the customer, selling goods to people who do not want them. The psychologist is shown busily at work, perfecting the technique of exploitation, which may be then handed over to the employing class, for use in its interests as against those of the worker and consumer. . . . A really impersonal science would have to be developing simultaneously a technique of resistance for the manipulated classes ". Owing to the position of advantage he occupies in the community the profiteer is often able to harness the most brilliant intellects and to set them to solve those problems that are not necessarily of primary concern to human welfare but that offer the richest pecuniary rewards. Thus science after having slowly freed herself from the tyranny of theology is in danger of becoming the paid retainer of the fat and wheezy god of the market-place.

Nowhere does the essential unloveliness of the profiteer appear so hideous and garish as in connection with commercialized vice. The profiteer is not squeamish; he has only one measure of values, namely, returns on the investment. He has discovered that it is not only possible to capitalize the legitimate needs of men such as food and clothing but that the same thing can be done in the case of their baser appetites and with even greater gains. Hence all the clever arts of business used to create a market for legitimate products are now utilized to create a market for lust. In the case of the liquor traffic and the white slave trade vast and intricate business institu-

tions have been organized, representing millions of capital, for the sole purpose of arousing, cultivating and finally institutionalizing habits and appetites that menace the very existence of civilization itself.

The authorities of New York, when investigating the vice conditions in that city, were amazed to find a deep and fundamental similarity between commercialized vice and legitimate business. They discovered that "these associations and clubs are analogous to commercial bodies in other fields." The sole bond that lent unity and effectiveness to this mass of hideous moral corruption was the desire for gain. Profitism welded together into one nefarious group "those who profit off the place—the land-lord, janitor, agent, amusement-dealer, brewer, and furniture-dealer; those who profit off the act—the keeper, procurer, druggist, physician, midwife, police officer, and politician; those who profit off the children—employers, procurers, and public service corporations; those who deal in the futures of vice—publishers, manufacturers, and venders of vicious pictures and articles; those who exploit the unemployed—the employment agent and employers; a group of no less than *nincteen* middlemen who are profit-sharers in vice".[1]

The story of commercialized vice is particularly illuminating since it exhibits the utter indifference of the profiteer to those higher moral and spiritual values which after all make life tolerable. There is a sort of grim and ghastly humor in the calculation of the Chicago vice commission of the relative earning capacity of the chaste girl and the prostitute. The pure and honest girl, working in a Chicago department store for the meager sum of six dollars per week, represented a return of five percent on an investment of six thousand dollars, while the girl of the street represented from the standpoint of profitism a return of five percent on $26,000. "In other words a girl represents a capitalized value of $26,000 as a professional prostitute where brains, virtue and other good things are nil, or more than four times as much as she is worth as a factor in the industrial and social economy,

[1] *The Social Evil in Chicago*, p. 231.

where brains, intelligence, virtue, and womanly charm should be a premium". Can we say that the profiteer ever rises above the ideal expressed in Mandeville's cynical lines?

> "So vice is beneficial found,
> When it's by justice lopped and bound;
> Nay, where the people would be great,
> As necessary to the state,
> As hunger is to make 'em eat.
> Bare virtue can't make nations live
> In splendor; they that would revive
> A golden age, must be as free,
> For acorns as for honesty."[1]

§ 5. The Morality of Profits

To demand a sanction for profits is to raise the most fundamental ethical issue of business enterprise. It places the entire business world on the defensive since that world is based avowedly upon the principle of profitism. We can distinguish two phases of the problem. The first deals with the general question as to the moral justification for profits in the abstract. Granting the morality of profitism as a business principle, we are faced with the questions arising in connection with the control and distribution of profits in the interest of human welfare.

We have seen that business grows through enterprise. Where business ventures are inaugurated they require, of course, capital. It is an inevitable accompaniment of the capital so used that the risk of its loss is greater than the average investor likes to assume. Society, however, needs the advantages that come through business expansion. It is most important, therefore, that some one should be willing to relieve society as a whole of the risk while undertaking to meet the need for business development. The entrepreneur is the risk-taker of the business world. The risk-takers of course vary indefinitely, a fact that affects the amount of the profits that are the reward for this risk. A

[1] Bernard de Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. 11, edition of 1795.

fire insurance company, for example, assumes a risk for an individual or a firm. Its profits derived from shouldering that risk are fairly definite and calculable since the risk assumed covers only the money value of the buildings and is based upon statistical averages. On the other hand, the risk taken by the promoter of a gold mine or of an oil field must necessarily be much greater, and from the point of view of the risk theory of profits he is entitled to a much greater reward. It is argued, furthermore, that the experienced and skilful enterpriser is able to avoid losses which the tyro would incur. Society, therefore, becomes the greater gainer by encouraging and rewarding his greater experience and skill. In other words, "Risk-taking is to be ranked along with land, labor, and capital, as one of the four fundamental divisions of the productive forces, and profit, its reward, is to be classed with rent, wages, and interest as one of the four radically distinct forms of income".[1] Such in brief is the commonly accepted risk-theory of profits.

Our reaction to this or to any other theory seeking justification for profits will depend in the last analysis upon the way in which we view the structure of society as a whole. Underlying the orthodox risk-theory of profits is the assumption of a dynamic society in which the creative human wills and the contingencies due to unforeseen changes must be reckoned with. In a social order which sanctions private property and recognizes risk as a permanent element, profitism in some form or other would seem to be inevitable. On the other hand, if we accept a more static conception of society in which private property is eliminated, the notion of profits is apt to be absorbed by that of wages. Profits will be viewed as a form of reward due to the imperfections of the arts and man's lack of control of economic forces. After science has given us complete command of the forces of nature, after competition has done its perfect work in directing social evolution, after prices are brought into close and rational connection

[1] Hawley, "The Risk Theory of Profit," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. VII, 1892-93, p. 479.

with the expense of production, it will then be possible to have a highly institutionalized and centralized society in which the risk-taking entrepreneur will be superfluous. His place will be filled by the salaried manager. It must be confessed that a society assuring room for individual initiative, spontaneity, and adventure together with profitism with all its limitations is infinitely preferable to the society of the Socialist, freed from profitism to be sure, but sacrificing individuality on a Procrustes' couch of arbitrarily determined function and status.

The most damaging argument against profitism is the moral one, namely, that it fails to appeal to the highest and the best in man. There is no more striking evidence of this fact than the growing distrust of profitism that can be detected in many directions. Men distrusted profitism before the war; when the supreme values of our civilization were jeopardized by that memorable struggle men suddenly awoke to the fact that the selfish motive of profits was a public peril. Distrust of profitism is evinced in the constant efforts that are being made to take from the sphere of profits one vital activity after another. Education, public health, public utilities, scientific research, the press, art, and even politics have at one time or another provided a setting for the eternal struggle of a free people to keep the well-springs of its national life free from the clutches of the profiteer. This has even suggested to some that the drift of the times points to a stage when profitism like everything that is outworn, mean and futile will be discarded entirely. "What is the meaning of these protean efforts to supersede the profiteer if not that his motive produces results hostile to use, and that he is a usurper where the craftsman, the inventor and the industrial statesman should govern?"[1]

Economists themselves frankly admit the lower level from which business seeks its incentive and often express the desire that the great commercial fabric might be animated by those nobler ideals that appeal so powerfully to the hearts of men

[1] Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery*, p. 30.

in religion, science, and education. At the same time they insist that throughout history the more powerful and coarser motives have ever been those that have prevailed with the masses of men. The economist even asserts that without this broad and powerful appeal of business to the lower impulses of men the great economic advancement, especially of the last two centuries, would not have been possible. "It is probable" writes Taussig, "that motives of the same sort will long continue to operate, and will long continue to be indispensable for sustained material progress. The business man, as we know him, with his virtues and his faults, his good effects on society and his evil, will long be with us. Business profits will long be a factor of the first importance in the distribution of current earnings and in the shaping of social stratification".[1]

§ 6. The Distribution of Profits

Assuming, as apparently we must, that profits will long continue to provide a powerful incentive in business enterprise, the more immediate and practical question arises as to the ethical canons by which profits should be distributed. The problem of the distribution of profits may be considered from the point of view of the economist or the moralist. They seldom agree in the solutions they propose for the simple reason that they approach the problem from different angles. For the economist the physical energies concerned in production and the so-called law of supply and demand are apt to be the determining factors. The moralist, having in mind chiefly the matter of personal worth, is apt to stress the more abstract matters of equality, sacrifice, needs, and welfare. For the moralist the problem is primarily one of human welfare; for the economist it is frequently a matter of the operation of laws that lie without the scope of the moral. We shall find that the economic and ethical phases cannot be divorced.

That supply and demand play a part in the distribution of pecuniary rewards can not be denied. We are made pain-

[1] *Principles of Economics,* Vol. II. p. 169.

fully aware of this fact in our efforts to control the food profiteer. When scarcity arises in the case of the fundamental necessities of life and that through the operation of forces lying beyond human control the situation is one that lends itself easily to the manipulations of the profiteer. Under normal conditions it seems best to let the situation adjust itself through the incentive to profits offered by the scarcity, provided of course the scarcity is not artificially created as in the case of monopoly. Scarcity of houses, for example, increases rents and consequently the opportunities for profits. This in turn increases building activity until the equilibrium between supply and demand is once more established. This method is crude, even irrational, and individuals often suffer while others prosper, but in a situation as tremendously complex as the social order it is perhaps the best and quickest way for society to supply its needs. The principle of profitism is here appealed to because it works. While essentially selfish and circumscribed in its point of view it is made to serve the larger cause of human welfare. The individual's profits are merely the price society as a whole pays for the better housing of its citizens. It is obvious, however, that scarcity, when not artificially induced, does not in and of itself involve any moral principle. It can not, therefore, determine for us the principles of distributive justice, a fact society recognizes when it controls by law the attempts of the profiteer to exploit to his own advantage the abnormal scarcity of such necessities as sugar or flour.

Productivity has been much emphasized by the economist as providing the best principle for the distribution of rewards. Productivity has this distinct advantage over scarcity that it is immediately dependent upon human activity. Furthermore, it would seem that in the distribution of rewards those immediately concerned in the production of the goods should take precedence. But upon examination it will be seen that production taken alone can give us no infallibly just principle for the distribution of profits. In the first place, it can be

applied successfully only among producers belonging to the same class and performing some uniform simple task. But who, for example, is able to determine the relative productivity in a shoe factory where scores of different workmen have contributed to the making of one shoe? By what standard of measurement are we to determine the rewards of engineer, track-walker, ticket-agent, train dispatcher, clerk, or president in a great railroad system? Furthermore, shall the mere fact of the accident of a superior endowment, physical, mental, or otherwise, that enables one to produce more than another, suffice as a basis for the distribution of rewards irrespective of needs and capacities and conscientious effort? This would be equivalent to making distributive justice depend upon the whims of Dame Fortune.

The economic principles of scarcity and productivity must be supplemented by other norms more strictly ethical, such as sacrifice, need, and human welfare. These norms, however, divorced from the immediate concrete situation, are mere empty generalizations. They depend for sanction and power of social control upon public sentiment. For the economist the good of society is best furthered, and there is the most equable distribution of profits, where there is free and full operation of the abstract principle of competition. But even competition, as Taussig observes, "depends partly on law, partly on public opinion and the pervading moral spirit". It would seem, then, that in a competitive society the rôle of enlightened public sentiment in regulating the abuses of profitism is most fundamental.

So long as we have private property, the entrepreneur and individual initiative, it is practically impossible to provide more than general regulations for the distribution of profits. Owing to the thousand and one factors such as difference in individual capacity, advantages of location, control of natural resources, business connections, and what not, there will always be individuals and corporations that will make exceptionally large profits. Between the demands of charity on the one hand and strict justice on the other there is a middle ground of equity

or fairness which corresponds to the demands that an enlightened social conscience makes upon those who have accumulated great profits. The actual extent to which this sense of equity is able to influence individuals to use their profits for the good of the community will be measured directly in terms of the conscious pressure of the moral sentiment of the community. Where the social conscience is alert, informed, and sensitive we are apt to have more socially minded millionnaires. On the whole, it seems wiser to permit these large profits and trust to the pressure of the enlightened public sentiment to secure their equable distribution than to undertake the difficult and dangerous task of their strict regulation.

§ 7. Competition

If money provides the standard of values in business enterprise and profits the incentive, it is competition that furnishes the regulative principle. Competition is the general term applied to situations where rivals are seeking the same object or end. In business it is used of the complex situation in which wages, prices, interests, and profits are regulated through free bargaining in an open market. Competition is not a force or an agent or a concrete entity. It is not a fixed law either of ethics or of economics as Adam Smith imagined. There is nothing about it to suggest an institution or a permanent way of life. It is merely a method of action that arises out of the prevailing organization of society. The present competitive society is recent in origin and undoubtedly crude and imperfect. We have no reason to imagine that it will be any more permanent than feudalism and the gild system or mercantilism.

Competition as a principle of business enterprise has been almost as great a storm-center as profits. "Sweet competition! Heavenly maid!" wrote Charles Kingsley scornfully in *Cheap Clothes and Nasty*. "Nowadays hymned alike by penny-a-liners and philosophers as the ground of all society . . . the only real preserver of the earth! Why not of Heaven, too? Perhaps there is competition among the angels,

and Gabriel and Raphael have won their rank by doing the maximum of worship on the minimum of grace". Contrast this with the calm assurance of the economist: "There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that the world is far better served under this competitive system than under any other system of industrial regulation which has hitherto been tried".[1]

There is no doubt that competition is viewed by modern society not only as an incontrovertible principle of economics but also as an authoritative norm of the social conscience. The prevailing theory of the middle ages was that a just price (*justum pretium*) for a necessity like bread existed and the authorities determined what it was so that the seller might not endanger his immortal soul by asking too much and the buyer might be protected from extortion; the prevailing philosophy was *caveat vendor* instead of, as to-day, *caveat emptor*. This fixity of price led the consumer naturally to use bread freely, thus bringing about a scarcity or the very thing men sought with the just price to avoid. The regulation of prices through competition arose to correct this situation and hence free competition has hardened into a principle with all the sanctity and authority of an ethical norm.

It would be difficult to prove, however, that competition is inherently any more moral than natural selection or the attraction of gravitation. Absolutely "free competition", if there be such a thing, is far removed from the ethical sphere. Several years ago thousands of people were quietly sitting in the Iroquois Theater in Chicago. At the cry of "Fire" there was suddenly precipitated a mad struggle for the exits. Here was competition without let or hindrance and with such deadly effectiveness that six hundred people lost their lives. "Free competition" of this sort is at the widest remove from morality. Furthermore, free competition even in the modern business world has not always made for social justice. It is probable that competition *when properly regulated* has made for equilibrium between production and consumption; it has

[1] Hadley, *Freedom and Responsibility*, p. 121.

aided progress by stimulating human energies; it has assured a measure of justice in the relations of wages and profits; it has benefited the poor and those in moderate circumstances through the lowering of prices; it has served to help men find their proper places in the social order. On the other hand, competition has also often endangered the balance between production and social needs; it has failed signally to equalize the distribution of profits and fortunes; it no longer controls prices in such important commodities as steel, oil, meat, and sugar; it is excessively wasteful, as when it encourages the rise of rival concerns which often combine and force the community to pay for useless investments; worst of all, competition, where it is given any measure of freedom, tends to destroy itself and pass over into its opposite, monopoly.

Competition, especially among economists, has been worshipped as a fetich. It is appealed to as the magic "Open Sesame" that unlocks all problems. It has been uncritically identified with the doctrine of the struggle for survival contrary to Darwin's own teachings. Against such a forbidding and inhuman philosophy writers of various schools have risen in revolt. "To attribute", says Kropotkin, "the industrial progress of our century to the war of each against all which it has proclaimed, is to reason like the man who, knowing not the cause of rain, attributes it to the victim he has immolated before his clay idol. For industrial progress, as for each other conquest over nature, mutual aid and close intercourse certainly are, as they have been, much more advantageous than mutual struggle".[1] A socially minded economist is careful to tell us that "Competition is something essentially different in character from the struggle for existence among the lower animals. It is a struggle so ordered that outside parties reap a benefit instead of suffering an injury".[2]

President Hadley's language suggests the true place of competition in any scheme of moral values. Its rôle is subsidiary, not final and determinative. Competition is a relative

[1] *Mutual Aid, a Factor of Evolution*, p. 298.
[2] Hadley, *Freedom and Responsibility*, p. 122.

term. It implies rules, a social situation held together by a common body of loyalties. This gives us the ethical and social type of competition as opposed to the non-moral and unsocial competition. The typical illustration of the ethical type of competition is to be found in sport. Here competition is pleasurable and profitable and just because it is governed by the rules of the game. The players, to be sure, are contending with each other. In a deeper sense they are also coöperating in that they abide by the rules. We have already alluded to the fact that in the evolution of human society three great systems have emerged offering different fields of action and different schemes of valuation, namely, dominance, competition, and coöperation. There is much to support the contention that of these three types of social organization the most valuable is coöperation. If this be true, competition, in the harsh and selfish form that we now know, is destined to disappear. At best it will survive in the more rationalized and socialized form of rivalry or emulation.

In this process of rationalizing and socializing the principle of competition the leading part is to be played by an enlightened social conscience. Custom and the social conscience are the guardians of justice; competition, as we have known it in American society, is the arch enemy of custom and conscience. By constantly subjecting traditional norms and customs to unchecked competition these norms are weakened and discredited in the popular mind. The kindly disposed manufacturer with traditional ideals of right may not wish to make a dollar shirt through sweat-shop labor. Competition, however, which recognizes no such humanitarian standards, forces him to discard his higher ethical standards or be forced to the wall. Because of the unchecked sway we have given to competition in American life, status and custom and social conscience have been discredited as instruments for social adjustment and the distribution of social goods. As a nation we are suffering from an overplus of competition and a lack of social norms that are necessary to keep competition moral and socially serviceable. This is reflected

in the quickness and versatility of the average American, his nervous tension and restless energy, qualities that are the product of a highly competitive society, but which are often misdirected because of the lack of proper sanctions.

Nowhere is the helplessness of American competitive society before the forces it has liberated more strikingly exhibited than in the business world. The wastefulness, the brutality, the unscrupulousness and the occasional note of anarchy in business are the legitimate results of competition working without the check of higher loyalties. The problem is complicated by the fact that the simple individual competition of Adam Smith and the classical economists has given place to a competition between groups. Labor and capital combine to make more effective their powers of competition. Competition of this type is infinitely more serious than the competition between man and man. Combination in itself is not an evil; it is only when this increase of power is sought to give expression to unregulated group ideals that the moral integrity of society is threatened. If "collective bargaining", for example, means simply the pooling of interests on the part of the workers so that they may give more effective expression to group needs under the control of generally accepted norms of social justice and public welfare, then the union is morally justifiable, even necessary. On the other hand, if this pooling of interests is merely for the sake of applying force for the furthering of group interests without regard to social sanctions or public welfare it is a menace to the community. We can never solve the problem of competition as an instrument of social progress until we incorporate in the sanctions of all the competing groups a common body of principles that will assure to society the carrying out of this competition in a peaceful and socially profitable way.

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CHAPTER XXI

THE PROBLEM OF THE CITY

§ 1. The City and Civilization

The city has always been associated with the highest and holiest interests of men. Plato's masterpiece, the *Republic,* is but a philosophical glorification of the Athenian city-state. In its boldest flight the apocalyptic imagination of the early Christian seer pictures the divine consummation as " the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband ". " Everything harmonizes with me, which is harmonious to thee, O Universe ", mused Marcus Aurelius. " Nothing for me is too late, which is in due time for thee ". And then, as though addressing himself as a citizen of the Universe he adds, " The poet says, Dear City of Cecrops; and wilt thou not say, Dear City of Zeus? ". Augustine thought that all the swirling streams of history, sacred and profane, though dyed red by torrents of war and rapine, would be stilled and purged in the eternal " City of God ". In his ideal city we have the first attempt at a philosophy of history and our most stupendous apologetic for the finality of the Christian faith.

From the earliest times the city has furnished the choicest products of civilization. Karnak's pillared aisles and avenues of solemn sphinxes are still eloquent witnesses to the glories of Egyptian Thebes. The brilliant city-states of Greece and Rome provided the centers of classic culture. Towards the close of the middle ages the cities of northern Italy illustrated the potentialities of intensive urban life for stimulating the intellectual, artistic, and economic activities of men. During the eighteenth century the city fell into ill repute, especially in the minds of Protestants of the Puritan type, owing to its vices and excesses. London's birth rate did not exceed its

death rate until the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was not until the tremendous industrial advance of the middle of the nineteenth century that the city began to assume in American life the rôle that it has played from the beginnings of civilization.

§ 2. The Background of the American City

The rôle of the city in American life is intimately connected with the way in which the city has developed. Aside from a few cities on the Atlantic coast the American city is recent and inchoate in its origin and growth. It bears all the tentativeness and uncertainty of an experiment. The vast majority of our cities have been in very truth little more than industrial accidents. The exigencies of rail or water transportation, the discovery of valuable natural resources or the location of convenient sites for mills and factories, these rather than any thought-out plan for the furthering of human welfare have determined the American city. Around industrial and transportation centers have arisen huge urban agglomerates with amorphous buildings and accidental streets. The problem is still further complicated by the fact that the citizens of our late born American cities have little or no training that would enable them to appreciate the problems of the city. Great masses of foreigners herded together in our mill districts are prevented by racial disabilities from entering in any effective and sympathetic fashion into the corporate life of the city. But the lack of civic traditions is not due solely to the presence of the foreigner. The mass of native Americans come to the city from the country and the small town, imbued with the traditions of a rural environment which do not fit them for coping successfully with the problems of intensive city life.

The lack of coherence in the life of the American city is strikingly illustrated by comparing the modern with the ancient or mediaeval city. The latter was imbued with the feeling of solidarity, hedged about by status. In ancient and mediaeval times the individual lived and moved and had his

being in the city. Plato found it most expedient to approach the analysis of the fundamental virtues of justice not from the individual but from the civic point of view. The problem of justice that seemed so confused and contradictory from the individual's experience was written in large and legible characters in the life of the Athenian city-state. Likewise the mediaeval man reasoned from the city and the status it guaranteed him to the problem of individual rights. Status in city or state predetermined rights and duties in trade and industry. The social conscience, therefore, in antiquity and in mediaeval times readily found its orientation in the corporate life of the city.

The average American, however, views the place and the function of the city in his life as more or less negative. The city is a by-product of the social process or, at best, a sort of after-thought. Its demands are not viewed in a sympathetic light; too often they are felt to be unwarranted interferences with the sovereign rights and privileges of the individual. Just as the shacks of the western mining town were more or less accidental expressions of the egoistic impulses of the gold-seeker, so the city is here to satisfy certain external and necessary needs of the individual. The city must protect property, it must see that human life is not needlessly sacrificed through crime or disease, it must provide some regulation of traffic in the interests of the whole, it must educate the rising citizenship. But it does not enlist the whole-hearted loyalty of the individual, for the individual finds in other than civic activities the highest and best ways to develop his personality.

Out of the welter of individualism encouraged by the pioneer democracy of the earlier part of the last century, the modern city was born. It inherited the pioneer ethics of this period of continental conquest. For it was the casual creation of men who minded their own business and nothing else. "Like the continent the city had been scarred by the same waste and preëmption, the same insensate optimism, the same utter lack of prevision. Cities destined to be the home of multitudes had grown up with the

abandon of petty villages. Streets had been made narrow; parks had been forgotten; houses had been built upon the theory of packing boxes; drainage, water supply, fire protection—everything had been left to chance and the play of the instinct for gain. The theory of the American city was that of the pioneer's camp. People were there for business. Their living conditions must work out for themselves". The price America paid for her magnificent individualism was a "wasted continent; a brick and mortar substitute for a city; an unregulated and anarchic industry; a city slum; and an appalling and shameless political corruption".[1]

The individualism of the pioneer background out of which the modern American city originated has been accentuated by other factors. The city arose to meet the demands for profits and for economy of work irrespective of the effect upon the larger question of human values. This has meant the introduction of the machine process and rigid standardization of life. Hence it comes to pass that the philosophy of the machine is written large in the life of the modern city. The machine's mechanical precision is reflected in the barren, angular, unlovely streets of the mill town. The machine's uncompromising spirit appears in the rigid, upstanding mass of the tall office building. The heartlessness and impersonality of the machine are recorded even in the remote and passionless expression on the faces in the streets. For there is little in the machine-process to kindle human sympathies or arouse the higher loyalties of men without which the civic spirit is impossible.

Intimately associated with the machine-process in molding the spirit of the modern city is the principal of competition. If the machine is inclined to crush and ignore those feelings of solidarity and civic pride that have been the glory of the city in the past, competition tends to set men apart, to accentuate their individualities. For competition is militant, suspicious, secretive. It arrays worker against employer, buyer against seller, laborer against capitalist, entrepreneur against

[1] Weyl: *The New Democracy*, pp. 35, 66, 67.

consumer. In such an atmosphere there is small room for the spirit of "sweet reasonableness" without which there can be no insight into the deeper needs of society where the interests of men are one. Where militant competition rules, men have neither the time nor the inclination to sit down calmly to consider and adjust their difficulties. This combination of the heartlessness of the machine-process with the competitive pecuniary individualism in the life of our modern cities has induced an English scholar to remark, "In spite of the machinery of political, religious, social, and trade organizations in large towns, it is probable that the true spiritual cohesiveness between individual members is feebler than in any other form of society. If it is true that as the larger village grows into the town, and the town into the ever larger city, there is a progressive weakening of the bonds of the moral cohesion between individuals, that the larger the town the feebler the spiritual unity, we are face to face with the heaviest indictment that can be brought against modern industrial progress, and the forces driving an increasing proportion of our population into towns are bringing about a decadence of *morale*, which is the necessary counterpart of the deterioration of national physique".[1]

The problem of the American city has been further complicated by the play of political forces. At the time when the city began to forge to the front as a factor of prime importance in the rapidly unfolding American society, namely, at the close of the civil war, the mind of the nation was still suffering from the effect of the struggle with the slave power. Few to-day have any conception of the partisanship and the political bigotry, the almost fanatical zeal that characterized the thinking of men upon all national issues immediately before, during and after the civil war. A psychological situation had been created in which any intelligent consideration of problems of social reconstruction was impossible. Perhaps the most tragic illustration of this is found in the attempt to rehabilitate the ex-slave

[1] Hobson, *Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, p. 342.

states. The scandals of the Tweed ring in New York City, "Black Friday" in Wall street, together with the shameful exploitation of the conquered states under carpet-bag rule, cast a shadow over Grant's last administration and strikingly illustrated the general moral bankruptcy of the nation. In such a chaotic condition of the national mind what could be expected in the way of a solution of the growing problem of the city?

Since 1880 the rise of the independent voter is an indication of the tendency of men to revolt against the political ethic which pronounces a man a political pariah for failing to identify himself body and soul with some party. Without the presence of this independent vote the solution of the problem of the city is impossible. It has enabled us to separate local from national and state politics. Even the politicians of the old school are coming to recognize the right of the voter to follow his own judgment on local issues, irrespective of party affiliations. Thus, after long and disastrous political experiences, the American people are slowly coming to recognize what would appear to be almost an axiom of municipal policy, "the incongruity and absurdity of the intrusion of national politics into the local field, and the positive harm to the city of subordinating its local interests to the claims of national political partisanship, thereby preventing the city from having or following a local policy suited to its own needs".[1]

§ 3. The Bondage of the American City

It is only recently that the city has come to enjoy anything like an independent political and legal status in American life. Previous to the last two or three decades the city was the "abject slave of legislative caprice". In the theory of law the American city is the corporate creation of the state legislature. So far as the rights of the city are concerned, therefore, they are vested in a power beyond the control of its citizens. The ultimate test of any act proposed in the interest of corporate welfare lies not in the will of the

[1] Deming, *The Government of American Cities*, p. 78.

people immediately concerned but in the legislature. The New York Municipal Government Association found that the state was legislating upon domestic details which should properly be left to the towns and villages concerned, such as issuing bonds for the improvement of cemeteries, appointing a stenographer, raising funds for band concerts, sprinkling and oiling the streets, borrowing money to equip a fire department. Until 1911 the city of Cleveland was unable to prevent the disfiguring of its streets by signs, to regulate the architectural form of buildings facing public highways, to manufacture ice for charitable distribution, to banish dogs from the city, or to provide public lectures and entertainments. It is of course entirely obvious that this constant subordination of the corporate life of the city to an outside authority makes it difficult to develop civic pride or civic initiative.

Again the city has suffered from the ingrained fascination of the form of the federal government. The principle of checks and balances was followed in the bicameral city legislature and the pitting of administratve and legislative functions against each other. This ignores the fact that in city government it is not a matter of safeguarding fundamental human rights, as in the case of the federal government. The problem of the city is one of securing effective means for interpreting and executing the will of the community. The effective education of the social conscience of the city is not possible without some means of definite centralization of responsibility. The effect of pitting executive against legislative and of the multiplication of officials confuses the public mind, dissipates responsibility and opens the door to all manner of political abuses.

Most of all has the government of the city suffered from the pathetic confidence of Americans in the machinery of government. The average American suffers from the strange delusion that it is possible to formulate a piece of political machinery so perfect as to insure liberty and justice in spite of the vacillations of frail human nature.

There is no sadder commentary upon the story of American political life than the contrast offered between the detailed penalties for malfeasance in office, the elaborate machinery for securing faithfulness in the performance of political duties and the sordid political reality.

This trust in the machinery of government has been unfortunate in two ways. In the first place, the sheer fact of the existence of this complex political machinery tends to relieve the official himself of any feeling of responsibility; any liberties, therefore, which he may give himself and his friends without grossly violating the machinery of government are legitimate and right. Hence arises the vicious dualism in city and national politics between the theoretical ideals of democracy as laid down in laws and constitutions and the "rules of the game" that have come to prevail in "practical" politics. In the second place, this naïve trust in the efficiency of governmental machinery encourages the average citizen to dismiss from his mind all feeling of responsibility after he has dutifully selected the best men available at the polls. The watchfulness of public opinion becomes dulled in this way. In the end men become accustomed to look upon maladministration on the part of those in power as part of the tare and tret of politics, that is, as more or less unavoidable. This ingrained torpidity of the social conscience in the matter of keeping watch upon those in power is perhaps the most serious hindrance to good government in our American cities.

§ 4. The Problem of the City

The political helplessness of the city together with its intimate association with the expanding industrial and business life of the community made possible one of the darkest pages in American political life. The city was only a corporation that owed its rights and privileges to the state. This led men to look upon it from the selfish, business point of view. It was merely another corporation that could be dealt with as a rival concern. This was intensified by past

individualistic traditions. For the average man had come to imagine himself protected by certain inalienable constitutional rights in the possession of property and in the prosecution of his private affairs. He felt that the welfare of the city, as little as that of any other corporation, depended upon his sympathy and coöperation. The city came to be looked upon, therefore, as fair game in the universal scramble for profits.

The rapidly expanding life of the city gave rise to a group of public utilities, natural monopolies with great earning capacities. They naturally proved to be great temptations to the profiteer. The companies holding these franchises were forced into politics in the effort to protect and increase their profits. To secure political power the franchise owner had to associate with himself police, councillor, mayor, and all the machinery of the city government. The effort to control the political situation in the interest of increased profits did not stop there but extended to the courts and the state legislatures. In this wise the earning capacity of these great municipal enterprises gradually drew together a large and varied group of interests, the stock-holder, the city office-seeker, the banker, the corporation lawyer and a host of allied business interests that found it to their advantage to strengthen the hands of the franchise holder. Owing to the indifference and helplessness of the average citizen, there was nothing to offset this "cohesive power of public plunder" that served to weld into one powerful group those who manipulated the city's welfare in the interest of private gain.

There are few things in American public life that offer greater cause for shame than this exploitation of the city by the political profiteer. "For his own profit he has wilfully befouled the sources of political power. Politics, which should offer a career inspiring to the thoughts and calling for the most patriotic efforts of which man is capable, he has, so far as he could, transformed into a series of sordid transactions between those who buy and those who sell governmental action. His success has depended upon hiding the methods by which he has gained his ends. All the forms through which the voters are

accustomed to exercise their rights have been strictly observed. Untroubled by conscientious scruples, consistently non-partisan, he has welcomed the support of every party and been prompt to reward the aid of any political manager. Step by step he gained control of the party machinery. His fellow citizens have been in profound ignorance that he named all the candidates among whom they made their futile choice on election day".[1] Thus it happened that while the august symbols and forms of government remained apparently inviolate the real government of city and state passed into the hands of "an elaborate feudal system with its lords and overlords, each with his retinue of followers and dependents, all supported at the expense of the public".[1]

In time this body of interests created by the profiteer took on the form of a systematic organization at the head of which was the "boss". The "boss" was not at first felt to be an untoward phenomenon. The naïve public did not distinguish him from the inevitable and necessary party leader. In time men began to realize, however, that the "boss" was in reality but the sign of something more ominous, namely organized and systematized graft. It was found that his power extended far beyond the traditional lines of party. His sinister influence struck its roots deep into the business and industrial life of the community. Thus in time did the problem of the city slowly dawn upon the masses. It was the problem of ridding free democratic institutions of the sordid tyranny created by the unholy alliance between profiteer and politician. Is government to be bought and sold? This is the question. If the city loses the fight it will mean the defeat of democracy in the state and the nation. For the city is to prove either the hope or the despair of democracy.

The evil effects of the "system" in the moral life of the city are perhaps most strikingly in evidence in dealing with the problem of vice. There are certain violent forms of wrong-doing, such as murder, arson, or burglary, that will always be committed even where the police and city administration are

[1] Deming, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

above reproach. The real test of civic righteousness is found in the control of forms of vice, such as gambling, immoral shows, prostitution, and the illegal sale of liquor. These can only flourish where there is collusion with those in power or where there is inexcusable negligence in the administration of civic affairs. The alliance between the corrupt politician and the profiteer tends to facilitate an understanding with the forces of vice and corruption. For profitism is not choice either in its methods or in its affiliations. The stock in a brewing company or in a gambling concern may enjoy just as good a rating in the market as the most legitimate forms of business. Mr. McAdoo, writing of the gambling evil in New York, asserts that we must rid our minds of the notion that it is a matter of a few disreputable characters such as the professional gambler or the jail bird. "Taking the thing as a whole it is simply a vast business run on business principles, backed by men of influence and power, capitalized liberally and on a strictly scientific basis; there is no watered stock or over-issuing of bonds on the part of these syndicates; everything is down to actual money."

The "system" which is in the game for profits and profits alone does not draw invidous distinctions as to the sources of its spoils. The funds paid by a perfectly legitimate business for favors is welcomed just as readily as those garnered from the bawdy house. Hence, it has been argued by social reformers that the problem of the control of the vicious elements in the city can never be solved by "investigations" or "exposures" or stringent repressive measures by a reform party that for the time being has gained the ascendency. "If vice is an organized business", writes Professor Beard, "built on a profit basis in which land-lords, saloon-keepers, hotel-proprietors, and a whole range of powerful interests are deeply involved, and report after report demonstrates this to be a fact . . . then is it not sheer imbecility to waste our time and strength on 'exposures' of the police, the 'raiding' of resorts, and the whole range of coercive measures which 'divert' good people, but do nothing worth while to attack

fundamental causes? Mere repressive measures are always and necessarily temporary and ineffectual. Too many ruling persons and their retainers, as the recent Chicago investigation shows, have economic interests in the chief sources of crime and vice".[1]

But the most insidious and dangerous influence of the "system" in the life of the city is not found in its collusions with vice and corruption. The real menace of the "system" is that it tends in time to create a group consciousness, a feeling of solidarity, a standard of values in civic life. This group consciousness, based in the last analysis upon cupidity, usurps the place in the thought of many men not really corrupt or debased that should be occcupied by the nobler feelings of civic pride. In this wise many excellent individuals become arrayed against the real interests of the city and that by means of those civic instrumentalities that should serve to create a vigorous and enlightened social conscience. It is not that the measure of values in business, namely, profits, is made supreme in politics, a situation deplorable enough, but that the possibility of developing a higher civic sense is precluded by the fact that the chosen instrumentalities for the creation of this civic sense have been already prostituted to selfish pecuniary interests.

The presence within our cities of this closely integrated body of interests and loyalties associated with the "system" or interested in its preservation has formed and still forms perhaps the most serious hindrance to the formation of an efficient civic conscience. The problem is made more difficult by the fact that the ethics of the system or at least its measures of values and its methods of procedure bear a superficial resemblance to those of legitimate business. Men, taught to look upon profits as the one supreme test of values in business, find it difficult to see anything wrong in applying the same test to the administration of the city's affairs. Why should not the city, just as in the case of any other corporation created by state law, be treated as a legitimate field by the

[1] Beard, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

seeker for profits? Why should not a company be allowed to run a public utility exactly in the same way that it would manage its mine or its mill? If a corporation owns a public franchise, by what right does the city attempt to interfere with the profits of that corporation? Thus does the logic of business, applied to civic affairs, complicate for us the problem of civic righteousness.

§ 5. Suggestions for the Solution of the Problem of the City

"Municipal institutions are to liberty," says DeTocqueville, "what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people's reach; they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it. A nation may establish a free government, but without the spirit of municipal institutions it can not have the spirit of liberty". Undoubtedly the great problem of the future in American democracy is to develop those civic instrumentalities which will enable the city to play the rôle DeTocqueville saw that it was intended to play in the life of a free people.

This will involve the securing from the state of those constitutional guarantees for the free exercise of those rights and activities that concern the immediate welfare of the city. This will involve the elimination of partisan politics from city affairs together with its inevitable accompaniment, the political boss. This will necessitate the introduction of changes in methods of election, such as the short ballot, by means of which the average citizen will be able to concentrate his attention upon a few important issues and the men they represent. This will mean the centralization of responsibility and the simplifying of administrative agencies through commission government, city manager or otherwise, thereby making definite individuals responsible for those policies desired by the community. This will mean the creation of a body of experts in the various departments of municipal service who will hold their positions through merit and not through political fear or favor. This will mean, above all things, that those vital organs of

municipal welfare, the public utilities, will be controlled and, as far as feasible, owned by the city so that through them the free corporate life of the city with all its countless interests may secure effective and healthful expression. It will be seen that the program for the attainment of an effective civic conscience is one that is both complex and difficult of execution. But the task may not be shirked, for in this direction alone lies any hope for a successful solution of the problem of the city and of American democracy.

The factor that is responsible more than any other perhaps for the marvellous development of American industry and business has been freedom. The right to develop, to organize, to incorporate, to invent, to invest, to manipulate the resources of nature—this is what made possible our mastery over the material forces of civilization. Without freedom the American city can never play its proper rôle in the life of the nation. Home rule, therefore, is the first step towards the emancipation of the city and the development of the civic conscience. Constitutional guarantees must be won that will deliver the city from its bondage to the state legislature. This can only come through an enlightened public sentiment. "The representative local governments which our cities need for the development of a wholesome, self-reliant, and efficient community-life can be secured only as the result of state action in response to a widespread and persistent popular demand. . . . Agitation, enlightenment, persuasion, intelligent opportunism—these are the methods through which every political advance has been made in the United States. It is through them that our cities must win the right of self-government".[1] It is through just such campaigns for the education of the public that the intelligent and efficient civic conscience will be gained that will assure the proper exercise of municipal freedom.

It is evident, however, that to free the city from the traditional dominance of the state legislature or to emancipate it from partisan politics will not solve the problem. It is im-

[1] Deming, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

perative for the effective organization of sentiment that the voter be able to concentrate his attention upon a few officials responsible for a definite policy. These policy-determining officials should be sharply distinguished from those whose functions are purely administrative or technical. Back of the general movement toward commission government or a city manager we can detect this desire for a definite and effective means for the interpretation and execution of the community will. The psychological principles involved are simple. For it is a familiar fact that where the social will is forced to function in a given situation and through definite instruments the result will be in time habits of thought, standards of values, that are largely "mental patterns" created by these situations and instruments. Where we have municipal machinery that can be relied upon in the execution of the desires of the people it reacts upon those desires and moral ideals and tends to give them permanence and vitality. On the other hand, where the will of the community is constantly being obscured and defeated through inefficient administration or through the manipulation of politicians, the result will be a slow and inevitable process of education downwards towards social and municipal inefficiency, civic indifference and moral impotence. This perhaps is the most discouraging phase of American civic life in the past; it is the most dangerous menace to the moral integrity of the community. Corruption or long continued inefficiency inevitably lowers the moral tone of the city, accustoms men to lax ethical standards, and this reacts upon the spirit of American democracy, influencing in a thousand subtle ways the public and private life of the nation.

Obviously one of the most effective instruments for the education of the civic sense of the masses of men is the intelligent expenditure of public funds. Yet the Bureau of Municipal Research of New York after examining the financial reports of seventy-five American cities, states, "Of the seventy-five cities, sixty-eight do not show, with respect to current expenses and revenues, how much they have spent,

including bills not paid and revenues due but not yet received. There is thus no proper income account. Assets are not shown by forty-eight of the cities, which thus have no balance sheet, twenty-nine do not show the balance of appropriations unexpended, and twenty-one do not state their bonded debt. If the books of large private corporations were kept with the looseness displayed by the municipalities no expert accountant would or could certify to their correctness".[1] Contrast this statement with the splendid moral discipline gained through the thrifty administration of civic affairs in a city such as Glasgow,[2] and we realize what a powerful factor the city budget may be made in informing and disciplining the minds of citizens as to their civic interests and duties.

One of the most hopeful indications for the development of an effective civic sense is the rise of the city expert. With the application of trained minds to the problems of the city will come the constant accumulation of scientifically tested principles of city policy which will assure to the thinking public a measure of sanity and maturity of judgment in their grasp of civic problems. The great handicap of the well-intentioned citizen of the past has been the almost utter lack of such a body of knowledge. The result has been that too often when the reform element has gained control it has been embarrassed by the lack of technical knowledge and mastery of detail and has made mistakes which caused it to lose the confidence of the public. This has provided the "practical" politician with the desired opportunity for regaining control of the situation. It must be confessed that, so far as mastery of details is concerned, the skilled politician has heretofore proven more than a match for the reformer in spite of the latter's well-meaning moral idealism.

Closely associated with the educative effect of the expert in training the civic conscience is the press, not the daily press which unfortunately can not always be depended upon to give the facts, but municipal organs such as the *Denver Municipal*

[1] Beard, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
[2] Howe: *The British City*, Ch. XIII.

Facts, The Municipal Record of San Francisco, and the *City Record* of New York. The same end is furthered by organizations and clubs, some more or less political such as voters' leagues, some devoted to special problems of the city such as the child, housing, poverty, and the like. To these must be added bureaus of research interested in the scientific and sociological phase of the city. All contribute to the one end of supreme importance, the formation of a body of reliable information which gradually crystallizes in the mind of the average citizen and enables him to pronounce intelligently upon civic questions. This enlightened social conscience is in the last analysis the only reliable protection against the hosts of enemies that have hitherto preyed upon the economic, intellectual, and moral welfare of the city.

One of the most familiar facts of American life is the indifference of the average man to matters of civic interest. It is of course perfectly obvious that no efficient social conscience can ever be developed until this feeling of indifference is overcome. We have here a powerful argument for municipal ownership. For it offers one of the most effective means of creating a feeling of warmth and intimacy in the individual towards his city. "The experience of Great Britain", writes Mr. Howe, "seems to demonstrate that the greater the number of things done by the city the better they will be done. In America we have reversed that which is a commonplace in all other affairs of life, and failed to appreciate that interest, affection and work are in a direct ratio with responsibility".[1] The property instinct that has played such a fundamental rôle in the development of individual character can and must be utilized in the creation of a body of corporate sentiment in municipal affairs. Nothing so stifles and alienates this community of feeling as a situation in which the body of the citizenship is made to suspect that municipal institutions are being utilized for their exploitation. The city in this way comes to be considered an enemy that must be fought instead of a friend, an ally to be protected and served.

[1] *The City, the Hope of Democracy*, p. 156.

A most serious hindrance to the development of enlightened public sentiment in our large cities has been the commercialization of the daily press. Our great dailies are on the whole far from being socially minded. This "defection of the daily press," says Professor Ross, "has been a staggering blow to democracy."[1] The moral leadership enjoyed by Greeley, Dana, Halstead and others is gone. A study of the readers of the daily press in Chicago revealed the fact that the majority of men go to the newspaper for news or for advertising, but not for guidance on civic, moral or political issues. One looks in vain in the columns of the average paper for enlightened and unbiased discussions of such burning issues as capital and labor, government control, the problem of profits, the distribution of wealth, or the nature of democracy itself.

For this unfortunate situation the editor can hardly be blamed. He is in reality the victim of economic forces that have transformed the more or less poverty-stricken but independent organs of earlier days into great capitalistic enterprises. The great municipal daily is today to all intents and purposes a vast "business proposition," often representing millions. The owners of these great properties insist that they be run on a money-making basis. The newspaper, therefore, has become a "factory where ink and brains are so applied to white paper as to turn out the largest possible marketable product." In this way the commodity of publicity offered for sale for the convenience of the business world encroaches upon the ancient democratic and moral function of the newspaper as the faithful purveyor of the news, the mouthpiece of a free and democratic people, the keeper of the social conscience. The editorial column has become more or less an incident, a sop thrown to a time-honored tradition still dear to the hearts of a liberty-loving people.

[1] *Changing America*, p. 131.

§ 6. The Power of the Ideal

More than anything else perhaps the lack of spiritual vision, the inability to arouse the higher enthusiasm of men, is responsible for the failure to lift the civic spirit from the mire into which it has fallen through our neglect. We have little of that civic enthusiasm which led the citizens of Athens to spend large sums on public contests and, when victors, to ask no other reward than the privilege of erecting at their own cost a choregic monument on the streets of the city. The city will never solve its problems until it succeeds in arousing the spirit of *noblesse oblige* that prompts men to abandon lucrative positions to serve the community for the sheer love of it.

A movement that has proven most disconcerting to traditional party loyalties and has provoked much discussion is the spread of Socialism in American cities, such as Milwaukee, Akron, Columbus, and Dayton. In the recent campaign for the mayoralty of New York City the number of votes polled by the Socialist candidate, Mr. Hilquit, likewise challenges explanation. It is doubtless true that the spread of Socialism is due primarily to the moral bankruptcy of the old régime of city government. "It is in the boss-ruled, corporation-ridden, tax-burdened city, with its poorly paved, ill-lighted, dirty streets, its insufficient water-supply and air-filled mains, its industrial fire-traps, its graft-protected vice districts, its fat politicians, untaxed wealth, crooked contracts and wasteful resources, that Socialism finds its best object-lessons and has won some of its most significant, if not most of its numerous successes." [1]

But this alone does not suffice to explain the attraction of Socialism to many sober American citizens. There is an unmistakable note of idealism running through the Socialist municipal programs. The emphasis of home rule, of municipal ownership, improved sanitation in tenements, free employment agencies, enlargement of the functions of the school

[1] Hoxie, *Journal of Political Science*, Oct. 1911.

system, the erection of public institutions such as markets, cold-storage plants, abattoirs, and the introduction of the eight hour day in municipal work have all appealed to the imagination of men just beginning to feel the dynamic spirit of a new democracy. There is, underlying all these municipal programs, an emphasis of fundamental human values, a recognition of comprehensive social needs, for which we look in vain under the old regime of partisan politics. Most conclusively do these schemes for civic betterment and the response they have aroused in many cities prove the mistake of those who imagine that the selfish appeal of the spoils system or the economic motive of profit alone can be depended upon to inspire the hearts of men. To be sure, the "cohesive power of public plunder" has proven a powerful factor in the past in uniting men and in securing effective group action. But the power of these lower appeals was due as much to the lack of any competing ideal of a noble character as to the natural susceptibility of men to selfish interests. We have yet to learn in civic life the power of the ideal.

But such moral idealism can not come without adequate leadership. Where are we to look for such leadership in the city? Is it to be furnished by the pulpit, the school, the social worker, or the professions? Hardly. These may and are even now making their contributions. But the real leadership must come from that group which in reality shapes the spirit of our modern civilization, namely, the business man. For it is important to remember, as was pointed out in a previous chapter, that the present is an industrial civilization, shaped by the machine process and animated by the spirit of business enterprise. What the minister was to the society of Puritan New England, the business leader is to the modern social order. He is the high priest of the Great Society. To be sure, he holds this position of power not by any special merit of his own. The modern industrial society is the result of a long evolution. But those who occupy this place of power and of privilege in our modern life can not escape its responsibilities. The duty of pointing the way

to a better day can not be relegated to teacher, minister, politician or social reformer while the business man "plays the game" for profits. The keeping of the social conscience of the city, in so far as it has a keeper, and the shaping of the social conscience of the city in so far as it can be shaped are largely in the hands of our leading business men. If the present industrial order breaks down, as some think that even now it shows signs of doing, the burden of responsibility for its moral bankruptcy will rest squarely upon the shoulders of the business man.

There is in every city an effective instrument through which the business man can make his influence felt, namely, the chamber of commerce. "The antedote for false leadership," writes Mr. Lucius E. Wilson, vice-president of the American City Bureau, "is the modern chamber of commerce. Its organized machinery tests the soundness and the hopefulness of men and ideas as no other institution does."[1] There is not lacking evidence that this influential agency of the business life of the city is gaining a new sense of its social responsibility. In opposition to its antiquated predecessors the modern chamber of commerce seems at last to be awakening to the true community spirit. It no longer talks the language of the smug materialism of other days though this language is still echoed in popular text-books on economics. Professor N. A. Brisco, for example, begins his excellent book *Economics of Efficiency,* with these words, "This is the age of industry. Industrial achievement is the aim and goal of all civilized nations." "Cities live by their business life with the outside world," says another writer, "and on this foundation build whatever superstructures of religion, culture and morals their inclinations and their means allow." To this must be opposed the words of President Hadley, "No economist of reputation at the present day would attempt to ignore the ethical aspects of an institution, as might have been done fifty years ago. He would say that nothing can be economically beneficial which was ethically

[1] *Community Leadership,* p. 59.

bad, because such benefit could be only transitory." Wealth is of two kinds, material and immaterial. If we place in one heap all material wealth in manufactured products, mills, merchandise, newspapers and buildings, and set over against this the ideals that animate the masses, this intangible spiritual possession will outweigh the material. For in reality the material wealth is the creation of the spiritual wealth of the community.

Business leaders are beginning to draw a very healthful distinction between wealth and welfare. It is being realized that these two terms are not synonomous and that the latter must take precedence over the former in any sane philosophy of life. When once this fundamental distinction is grasped it will be possible to place a check upon the irrational expansiveness of profitism and to see that first and foremost the forces of the business world seek a normal standard of life. If we are ever to get away from wasteful economic self-assertion and succeed in the herculean task of rationalizing business enterprise and teaching it to recognize some far-flung goal of social and national good, it must be through the powerful influence of the group of men, who occupy the strategical position in our modern life. It can never be done effectively by those on the outside.

The business group who dominated the life of the city of a generation ago were wont to talk in mysterious and august tones of the primacy of " the interests of business." One gathered the impression that " business interests " were something apart from the life of the ordinary man and were sacrosanct. For government or the outsider to seek to penetrate this inner circle was not only dangerous but impudent intermeddling. It might even be imagined " that the human race was created for the good of Business—and, later, for the god of Business. These same selfish men acknowledged with becoming ponderosity that they were the high priests of the newly discovered god." But this air of mysterious and sacrosanct dignity no longer animates the business man of to-day. He is coming more and more to realize that the problems of

the city and the community are his problems, even more than they are the problems of the average man, because of the responsibilities of his position.

Finally, the business man of the new order is beginning to grasp the meaning of the psychological principle underlying our great urban civilization and making it possible, namely, that effective team-work presupposes effective team-thinking. Here at last the prevailing business order seems to find common ground with democracy. Within the realm of business enterprise we can trust to the impetus of profitism to secure the effective application of team-spirit. It is the secret of the marvellous success of many industrial institutions. But can we trust the business man to extend the spirit of team-spirit and team-work beyond the sphere of business and apply it to the city and to the community? Can we expect to vitalize the existing social machinery for team-thinking and team-work or to create machinery where it is non-existent by any other appeal than that of business gain? Or, stating the problem in still stronger terms, can we expect the business man to subordinate the team-spirit of business to the team-spirit of civic progress when the two conflict? This is the fundamental problem of the city and of American democracy.

Workers for reform in civic affairs have not yet learned how to utilize the latent idealism of American life. Efforts to better the city have too often been motivated by ends that do not call out the best that is in men. This is shown in the frequent demands for the so-called "business man's administration". It was entirely natural that the first step toward the improvement of the chaotic conditions of the city some decades ago should be made in the interest of business and from the business man's point of view. The needs of business and industry for efficient city government are among the strongest incentives to reform and doubtless will always remain so. It was natural, furthermore, to think that if a business man should be placed at the head of the city's affairs and should be allowed to introduce the methods that had worked such wonders in business the prob-

lem of the city would be solved. In fact we have in the appeal to the business man but another illustration of the ingrained admiration of the average American for success, for those who "do things," alluded to in an earlier chapter. The long discipline of the nation gained through its struggle for mastery over the forces of nature and the glorification of the "captain of industry" who is the concrete embodiment of this type of success explain the readiness of Americans to apply the utilitarian and factual measure of values to the problems of the city. It was supposed that if we could convince the voter of the business advantages of cleaner streets, purer water, better car service, and of the elimination of graft and waste in municipal affairs, if, in other words, we could show him that these are "paying propositions," we could depend upon his casting his vote in the right way.

Slowly, however, experience is convincing us that something more inspiring than a "business man's administration" is needed to create a vigorous civic conscience. Profitism and public spirit somehow do not seem to affiliate. The all powerful desire of the individual for gain that drives the machinery of business seems to fail in civic matters. It is doubtless true, as Mr. Howe points out in the case of Glasgow, that thrift and civic spirit can be most intimately and effectively associated. It is a mistake to imagine, however, that a vigorous social conscience can be based solely or mainly upon the more or less selfish appeal of business interests. Profitism is being steadily discredited as an incentive in American life.

It may be said of course that the failure of the economic motive as a driving force in civic affairs is not due so much to its lack of lofty moral appeal as to the unwillingness of the hard-headed business man to invest his time and money in ventures that do not lend themselves to exact control and immediate returns, as is the case in individual business enterprises. It is doubtless true that from the purely utilitarian point of view civic interests can never compete with individual or corporate interests. "Under ordinary circumstances," as Professor Rowe remarks, "the citizen will not hesitate in his

choice between the public interest and private advantage if a 'dollar and cents' calculation is the only factor determining his conduct." [1]

The fundamental weakness, however, of the ideal of the "business man's administration" is found in its false psychology. All the elements in human nature are not exhausted by Adam Smith's famous "economic man." Men are after all something more than highly organized instruments for the consumption of economic goods. It still remains true, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, and in spite of the rise of a great industrial civilization, that "The life is more than meat and the body than raiment." At those higher levels of human interest, to which the economic appeal can not attain, men are moved by the desire for freedom, human brotherhood, and a hopeful outlook upon a richer and nobler existence in the years to come. What these loftier and more ultimate values have been able to do in religion and on the blood-soaked battle-field for liberty is but an earnest of future civic advances towards a nobler human order. It is no accident, therefore, that philosophers, saints and seers have clothed their thought in civic imagery. They suggest that in the city we have the form of social organization offering the greatest potentialities for human advancement. As a nation we have yet to discover the possibilities of the city for the solution of the eternal social problem. And as we test those possibilities it is well to remember John Stuart Mill's dictum, "One person with a belief is a social power equal to ninety-nine who have only interests."

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[1] *Problems of City Government,* p. 89.

CHAPTER XXII

POLITICAL OBLIGATION IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

§ 1. The Moral Significance of the State

Any neglect of the moral significance of the state must be disastrous for the development of the highest type of character. For character, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, is the result of the organization of the sentiments and emotions within a certain institutional setting. Excellence of character in every case will depend upon the definiteness and efficiency of the social institutions which shape it. Political obligation shaped in terms of some vague socialistic conception of human brotherhood or of international economic or class interests is sure to reflect the moral impotence and flabbiness of such a setting. Our own American life abounds in characters of the most pronounced type, as for example the "captain of industry." But the very strength of such characters is their weakness. They are the result of the organization of thought and life in terms of some definite and more or less limited point of view where too often corporate interests are placed above national interests.

In the development of personality the homelier and more commonplace virtues of honesty, courage or temperance are shaped by the immediate social institutions such as the family, the school, the club or business. The more comprehensive ethical norms that have to do with life in its entirety, such as justice, are given final shape by the most comprehensive forms of society, namely, the state and the nation. Where the state is merely a term for a collection of racial, religious or economic groups, or where it is synonymous with sentimental traditions only, as has been true of America to some extent, we may expect uncertainty and even scepticism as to the nature and

validity of our higher political loyalties. For political values, like all other values, are true and real just to the extent that they spring from the whole-hearted upright activities of men in a concrete political setting. Americans have yet to learn the moral significance of the state. The task is not made easier for them by the fact that those who occupy representative positions in our political life are too often anything but excellent moral exemplars. We have many admirable and talented men in politics and yet few of them are national and disinterested in their point of view.

The lack of a serious and morally sensitive political life is a handicap to any government but especially to a democracy. For all democracies from their very nature and purpose must be critically frank with themselves and with the world, keenly aware of their national aims and fearless in their demands for the truth and the open mind. Political moral sensitiveness, in other words, is indispensable to the integrity and sanity of a democracy; it is the only guarantee of progress. A democracy is forced to risk its fate upon the honesty of human nature and the ability of the rank and file of the citizenship to determine their own political destiny. For these reasons a virile and progressive democracy is hardly to be expected where forces have been at work which discourage moral sensitiveness or vitiate the disciplinary effects of political experience. Political convictions which mean anything to us are the outgrowth of our political way of life; if that way of life does not provide sane and intelligent moral training the political conscience will be inefficient. The fact that proper political discipline has been lacking in the past of our national life may throw some light upon our moral sluggishness in righting some of our political ills.

§ 2. The Constitution as Political School Master

The environment of the early Americans was almost entirely lacking in mature and tested instrumentalities for the development of political sentiment. They were pioneers and were forced to create in the wilderness of the new world the

material basis for a civilization. They brought with them, however, the traditions of a mature culture; their demands for law and for advanced political institutions had to be satisfied. Hence the founders of the nation took over the traditions of the mother country, England, especially the common law and the achievements of the Puritan Revolution, and embodied them in bills of rights and in state and federal constitutions. The result was that the American people was from the very beginning a people with a mature political philosophy and yet with very immature social, economic and political institutions. The great conceptions embodied in our political symbols set a goal of political achievement destined to remain for generations far ahead of the actual life of the people; contrast for example the lofty ideals of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence with slavery which survived the promulgation of these instruments of liberty for over half a century.

The moral advantage of placing the crude and largely artificial American democracy under the tutelage of the Constitution can hardly be exaggerated. The early Americans were scattered groups differing widely in racial, religious and economic interests. They lacked social habits and mature and tested social institutions for the organizing of public sentiment; they did not have the background of national experiences and policies possessed by the older nations of Europe. It was almost indispensable, therefore, that their varied interests should have a central rallying point until the material foundations could be laid for civilization, until national habits of thought and common traditions could be formed, and the basis secured for a self-conscious democracy. It should not be forgotten, however, that the veneration for the Constitution and the feeling of the possession of a document which uttered the last word of political wisdom tended to discourage the critical spirit and educated the masses of Americans into careless indifference or good natured optimism on all national issues. This mental attitude was not conducive to the training of the highest and most efficient type of self-conscious democracy.

There was, however, no alternative. The founders of the American republic, having still in mind the struggles of seventeenth century England with despotism, feared absolute power in any form because they identified supreme power with brute force; they did not distinguish between the possession of supreme political power and the way in which that power is exercised. To be sure, they were determined to assert the sovereignty of the people; " The people alone have an incontestable, inalienable and indefeasible right to institute government, and to reform, alter or totally change the same when their protection, safety, prosperity and happiness require it." But to subject the young democracy to the absolute control of the popular will seemed to create a new despotism in the place of the old. This presented unpleasant alternatives. To follow out the implications of democracy and make the will of the people supreme was to put a new tyrant in the place of the old; to accept any other sovereignty than that of the people would defeat the spirit and intent of democracy.

A way out of the dilemma was suggested by the doctrine of natural rights expounded by Locke and thoroughly familiar to the thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Starting with this doctrine the founders of American democracy reasoned thus: if the inalienable and unalterable rights of the individual could be outlined in a code and this code made superior to the will of the people, the principle of social righteousness upon which alone a democracy is founded would be conserved and at the same time protection would be provided against the abuse of absolute power by the popular will. The prevailing political philosophy which vested the eternal principles of political justice in a transcendental order of nature and reason prevented the framers of the Constitution and the bills of rights from perceiving that they were in reality merely taking over and adapting to their own particular problems the rights already formulated by Englishmen in their struggle for freedom. We have, therefore, this rather paradoxical situation that the fathers of the republic, while insisting at least theoretically upon the sovereignty of the people, were in reality

distrustful of the people. Hence they made king Lex to be the ruler over king Demos, whom they feared. This they justified under the eighteenth century doctrine that the rule of law was superior to the rule of irresponsible and dimly self-conscious Demos because law may be made to express the eternal and indefeasible principles of justice and the rights of the individual. The fathers formulated a code and then abdicated their power as a sovereign people to this creature of their own hands with the sublime assurance that only in this way could their national calling and election be made sure. Like the ancient Hebrews bowing before the golden image their own hands had made, they cried, "These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage."

Paradoxical as it may sound, this undemocratic subordination of democracy to law was in the interest of democracy in the long run. The Constitution became the political schoolmaster to lead the masses to the far-off goal of an efficient and self-conscious democracy. "The Constitution," writes President Lowell, "was to us what a king has often been to other nations. It was the symbol and pledge of our national existence and the only object on which the people could expend their new-born loyalty." It provided a body of noble political ideals which, though far from being organically related with the daily thought and life of the average American, served as a spiritual and moral leaven in the life of the nation. Even the curse of slavery was not powerful enough to make the nation forget its spiritual birthright.

§ 3. The Rise of Law-Made Democracy

The subordination of the will of the people to a body of law was not altogether favorable to the development of an intelligent and self-sufficent democratic loyalty. Its immediate effect was to encourage a legalistic political conscience. As the inevitable process of social evolution went forward, new issues and new demands for social adjustment arose. There was need constantly for some sort of interpretation and appli-

cation of the principles of the Constitution to these issues. The integrity of the local democracies as well as of the nation as a whole was in danger of being shipwrecked upon the ever recurring necessity for readjustment. It was felt that there was political wisdom enough in the Constitution. It was merely a question of interpretation and exposition; this of course became the task of the courts. In this wise it came to pass that government in its last analysis fell into the hands of the lawyers and judges of the courts. For it was only necessary to show that any legislative or administrative act violated the principles of right set forth in the Constitution to make this act null and void even though it enjoyed the hearty endorsement of the people. This was practically equivalent to making the courts the keepers of the conscience of Demos. The arguments of lawyers and the decisions of judges have indeed played a part in the life of the American people that is without a parallel in the history of free peoples. A recent writer thus describes the rôle of the Supreme Court in American democracy. "These philosophical jurists were actually possessed of an unique power which might have aroused the envy and admiration of the philosophical dogmatists of all ages—the power of making a real world conform without protest to their own ideas of what a world ought to be. They uttered words based upon a free rational interpretation of other words, and lo! men bowed their heads and submitted." [1]

After all has been said in favor of the wisdom and the stability of a law-made democracy and the benevolent disciplinary régime that it provided for the immature political consciousness of the American nation, the question may still be asked as to whether it can ever give us the last word as to the meaning of democracy. Is the benevolent absolutism of law superior to the intelligent and self-directive will of the people? Is not the danger present that the conceptions of social justice ever taking shape in the social conscience may come to differ fundamentally from those embodied in a fixed

[1] Croly, *Progressive Democracy*, p. 142.

code? The situation is further complicated by the fact that justice has become less an individual and more a social matter. The problem of justice is now not so much to assure to the individual the enjoyment of certain inalienable and indefeasible rights possessed independent of the social order in which he lives as it is a question of securing to each and all fit institutions that make it possible to live the just life and to achieve the largest measure of individual development.

The moral ideal, so far as the political order is concerned, is not attained when we remove all possible restrictions from the individual so that he may freely and successfully put into execution abstract rights he possesses by virtue of membership in an indefectible order of reason and of nature. We now realize from our psychological knowledge of the developing self in society that the moral ideal is something to be achieved. We become moral and responsible by living ourselves into the social order. The state itself is a moral ideal. It lies to a large extent in the realm of moral possibilities. Each individual co-operates in the making of the political ideal actual in life. Political righteousness is something that is achieved through the intelligent and harmonious co-operation of human wills in the effort to realize a political program. Political integrity is ultimately a matter of the social worth of the acts and sentiments of the individual men and women as expressed on political issues. There is never at any one time any more righteousness in the community than there are men and women with mental attitudes or habits of will that make for social justice. The moral integrity of the state can never transcend the moral integrity of the rank and file of its citizenship. Laws, bills of rights or constitutions are at best merely programs, possible ways along which character may develop, ideal lines of political action which, however, wait upon concrete striving human wills to give them reality.

The legalistic political conscience that has grown up under the tutelage of our great political symbols and their eighteenth century philosophy owes its authority to the fact that the masses of men acquiesce in the finality of these symbols. This

habit of acquiescence, of dependence upon the verdicts of the courts and the arguments of the lawyers, may dull the edge of the political conscience of the community. It may fail to encourage a sense of responsibility or habits of criticism, of inquiry and of frank discussion without which efficient democracy is impossible. The solutions of living issues of social justice cannot remain always a matter of the technical pronouncements of judges who draw their conclusions, though ever so conscientiously, from a limited fund of political wisdom in a fixed body of law. This is injurious to a progressive democracy in two particulars. The moral discipline gained by thinking through the great issues of national life is thereby lost because this task is relegated to a body of legal experts. Their decisions, consequently, do not appeal to the masses of men as would popular thought-out conclusions, that are felt to be in close relation to life. This lack of political discipline doubtless explains our national trait characterized by Mr. H. G. Wells as "state blindness." Under a law-made democracy the element of authority, which is most important in its place, tends to overshadow political self-assertion and its accompaniment, the sense of responsibility. The problem of the future is to restore between the two elements of authority and freedom the healthful balance that has been disturbed by the long rule of a law-made democracy.

§ 4. Criticisms of Law-Made Democracy

Much of the prevailing confusion as to the meaning of democracy with its unsettling effect upon our notion of political obligation is due to a conflict between this old legalistic conception and a more recent and vaguely defined notion of a socialized democracy. It may be well, therefore, to state and criticize the case for law-made democracy.

An able exponent of the legalistic idea of political obligation thus voices his protest against the prevailing uncertainty as to the nature of political loyalties. "It is peculiarly unfortunate at a time like the present, when the acceptance of just principles is vastly important, not only to the peace and

order of our country, but to the union of all nations upon some common ground, that new conflict regarding the fundamental principles of justice should arise, that the authority of the courts and the value of the judicial system should be called in question, and that the whole conception of social relations should be thrown into the melting pot; for it has been thought by many, and has been hoped by a still greater number, that the American conception of the state, yielding authority to great principles of equity and to the rule of just and equal laws, might afford a basis for the reorganization of the family of nations, now torn by so many dissensions, and plunged into a maelstrom of deadly conflict." [1] Dr. Hill finds the essence of this new spirit of unrest in the disposition to annul the original act of popular renunciation, that is, to challenge " the voluntary self-limitation of power " which for him is the very essence of American democracy. This writer feels that once we let the increasingly self-assertive modern democratic spirit break away from its time-honored anchor in an indefectible body of law, it will have neither the virtue, the courage, nor the efficiency to preserve its own integrity in the stern struggle for existence.

The champion of the modern socialized democracy would doubtless agree with the scholarly author when he asserts, " It is only as men are able and willing to adopt fundamental principles of justice, of equity, of moderation, and of self-restraint, to abide by them, to reverence them, to love them, and to be prepared if necessary to die for them, that any light falls upon our shadowed pathway." It is doubtful, however, whether we can ascribe the present uncertainty to the alleged unwillingness of men to accept principles of equity and self-restraint. The problem lies much deeper. Men are eagerly, even anxiously, inquiring what is justice and what is equity between man and man. Their hesitation arises from the fact that fundamental social changes have altered their estimates of what was once accepted as final and right. They are seeking a revaluation of values. It is an unjust reflection upon

[1] David Jayne Hill, *Americanism: What is it?*, pp. 38, 39.

the seriousness and integrity of the present generation to imply that the root of the evil is found in lack of moral earnestness or unwillingness to support the cause of the right. The distraught modern man who gives any thought whatever to these questions will doubtless reply to such criticism, "Show me the way of truth and righteousness and gladly will I walk therein."

Mr. Hill lays down a fundamental principle of democracy when he says, "Where there is no sense of personal duty, no acceptance of universally obligatory ethical principles which majorities as well as minorities must obey, there is no ground of permanence in a democratic form of government." It is not a question, however, of universal ethical principles which majorities as well as minorities must obey. It is ultimately a question as to the nature and the sanctions of those principles. For the champion of legalistic democracy, political sanctions are vested in a body of eternal principles that lie beyond the changing experiences of men, that belong to the "nature of things" (the phrase is Dr. Hill's). These principles have been most clearly formulated, we are told, in the bills of rights and the Constitution. They should be obeyed simply because they are final, indefeasible and can not be affected by the changing political experience of men. They occupy very much the same position in the political sphere that Kant attributed to his categorical imperative in the sphere of morals. They reflect an eternal and indefectible order of things.

To this it may be replied that laws are but the rationalizations of the experience of men. They depend, therefore, upon the growth of experience for their material; they must constantly be referred back to this experience for the test of their validity. Constitutions and bills of rights are "obligatory" only in so far as they formulate those norms of action which best enable men to adjust their differences and preserve a social order in which men and women can live together with the least friction and the richest unfolding of human values. The legalist rests the binding character of the law upon the inherent moral and political merit it possesses independent of

what men think or do. He asserts that the law can not be invalidated by the altered opinions of men or by changes of an economic, social or political nature. The progressive answers that the ultimate sanction of the law is based upon a loyal acceptance of its mandates due to a reasoned and intelligent appreciation of the principles upon which it is based. For the legalist the law is binding because it expresses eternal and transcendent right; for the progressive, the law is binding because it expresses the tested moral convictions of the masses of intelligent men and women. When the law no longer meets with the approval of men it is at that very moment invalidated in spirit, if not in fact. The progressive contends that it is psychologically absurd to expect rational and moral creatures to order their lives according to principles which reason and conscience do not sanction; the legalist contends that without an ultimate political sanction independent of the fluctuations of the passions and prejudices of erring mankind all guarantees of rights and liberties are futile.

The real issue as between these two points of view depends upon the interpretation placed upon reason to which both appeal. Reason does not necessarily mean the will of the immediate and transient majority, the vociferous and more or less irrational *vox populi* as it finds expression in a political campaign. Reason may also be identified with the mature and tested experience of men stretching over years and even generations and embodied in their laws. If we magnify the latter notion of reason sufficiently we shall soon reach the transcendental realm of political verities in which the thought of the legalist moves and we shall be talking of "inalienable rights," "a body of unalterable principles," and the like, that persist with unchallenged authoritativeness from age to age.

It would seem, then, that the mistake of the legalist is due to his over-emphasis of a phase of the truth. Law must, for the sake of the continuity and preservation of the body politic, embody principles more comprehensive and binding than the immediate dictates of the will of the majority. This explains the feeling that justice and equity transcend the individual, the

community or the experience of one generation no matter how enlightened that generation may be. On the other hand, these principles of right owe their claim upon the loyalty of the individual, the group or the generation, not to the sheer fact of their universality but to the fact of an intelligent appreciation of their vital connection with the problems of the present. Where this appreciation is lacking obedience to the law, if it is secured at all, must from the nature of the case be mechanical; it can not be conducive to a self-conscious democracy. There is indeed a very real sense in which the moral ideas of the individual and the community will always be superior to the law. Time makes ancient good uncouth. This is true of laws as well as of morals. When, therefore, after any length of time the moral sense of men repudiates a law the question may well be raised as to whether the law has not outlived its usefulness. The moral values underlying a law are seldom invalidated through logic or metaphysical analysis; they die through disuse. When the need for the ways of acting provided for in a law has disappeared, the law is worse than useless for it merely beclouds the moral and political horizon.

It is obvious from the foregoing that legalist and progressive differ as to the nature of political sovereignty. The legalist insists that the people have magnanimously and wisely abrogated their sovereignty in favor of a written Constitution, which contains those ultimate principles which must find expression in true democracy. In the interest of freedom and of justice we must accept implicitly the authority of this body of law. The exponent of a socialized democracy, guided by the principle of evolution that has slowly permeated all modern thought, insists that government and law are a growth and spring from the life of the people. They can not, therefore, be made absolutely superior to the living experience that gave them birth. Their claim upon the loyalty of the people extends just as far as they serve the needs of the people. No body of laws can possibly be the last word of political wisdom since they are the result of a social process which is itself constantly

accumulating new facts and demanding new interpretations of these facts.

It may be pointed out, furthermore, that the legalist's contention as to the absolute character of political obligation in American democracy involves a contradiction. He concedes the people exercised an inalienable right when they framed the Constitution, but at the same time they embodied in that document inalienable rights belonging to every individual independent of all government. It is quite possible, then, that in exercising their inalienable right to form a government a free people may violate individual inalienable rights existing independent of government. We should have, therefore, the absurd situation where two inalienable rights contradict each other. Furthermore, since from the days of Locke it was commonly taught and believed that men had a right to revolt in the interest of these inalienable individual rights when they were threatened by unjust government, we have the still further absurd situation that men must fall back upon anarchy, or the repudiation of all government, in the defense of rights that are supposed to lie at the basis of all government.

Underlying the two conceptions of political obligation just sketched there are in reality two different philosophies of society and of the state. The one we may call the Newtonian, the other the Darwinian. It is a fact familiar to every student of social phenomena that the speculative thought in every age tends to take on characteristic features of the *Zeitgeist* of that age. It is quite possible to trace in the theological doctrines of the various creeds the pressure of ideas cherished in the society of the time. The *summa* of Aquinas, the *Ethics* of Spinoza, the *Contrât Social* of Rousseau, the political philosophy of Hegel or of Montesquieu faithfully reflects the dominant ideas of the time. It has been suggested that the organic law of the United States was framed under the influence of the Newtonian theory so influential during the eighteenth century. The " checks and balances " between the various arms of the government correspond

to the stars balanced against each other in the solar system; the president is a sort of central sun; the supreme and inflexible law of gravity that knits the suns and systems together corresponds to the indefeasible and inalienable natural rights that underlie all laws and constitutions.[1]

Directly opposed to this mechanical and static conception of the state we have the Darwinian theory that the state is a living thing. The norms of political obligation are not to be interpreted after the analogy of the mechanical universe of the stars but rather after the analogy of living and growing organisms. In the organism there is nothing to suggest "checks and balances." The significance of each part is determined with reference to the function it plays as a member of a living whole. The oneness of life that animates the organism is not derived from some source outside itself. The very essence of the life of the organism emerges in its unity and purposefulness, in the coöperation of the function of each member with that of the other for the preservation of the life of the whole. The norms that regulate the health of the organism as a whole likewise determine the functions of the individual members. It is this dynamic conception that inspires social democracy.

§ 5. The Democracy of the Future

The conclusions reached above suggest that we are entering upon a new phase in the evolution of American democracy. The ultimate bond of the democracy of the future can not be eternal principles of right embodied in a code of laws; it can not be the selfish ties of business; it can not be the coercive force of government and police control. The only enduring basis upon which a free people can rest their political loyalties is the conscious and reasoned convictions of the average man. The democracy of the future must be more than a body of laws, more than a social or political program; it must be also a faith, a loyalty. For, after all, the creative and forward looking elements in human life are

[1] Wilson, *The New Freedom*, pp. 45 ff.

our faiths. Faith is not only the "substance of things hoped for." It not only sketches the outlines of the masterpiece that is one day to be filled in with line and color. Faith is also creative, even militant. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even your faith" holds equally true for the political and the religious life.

To state the problem in psychological terms, we must secure in some fashion an effective organization of the sentiments of the average man around those comprehensive political and moral values lying at the core of the democratic ideal. This is indeed a collossal task. It means that we must rely upon ultimate spiritual and moral loyalties rather than upon the immediate and tangible political forms. We must seek to induce men to act, not in terms of the insistent and powerful egoistic impulses or the hard logic of legal precedent, but rather in terms of the "still small voice" of conscience, the more or less pale abstractions of truth, justice, and human welfare. The issue, however, is one that we may not escape. For modern democracy is becoming less a matter of personal rights, less a matter of party programs, less a matter of legal traditions, and more a state of mind, a feeling of community of interests based upon common ideals. This is inevitable from the structure of modern society itself with its increasing mutualization and socialization. The links that bind men together can no longer be seen and handled; they can be detected only by the mind's eye. It is the unseen things that are worth-while. Democracy must conform to the new social order or it must be content to live a precarious existence with no real place in the hearts and lives of men. The problem is in reality one of political self-preservation.

Faith becomes real only in action. The democracy of the future, therefore, must learn through doing. The life of nations is not essentially different from that of individuals and consists for the most part in endless attempts to solve problems. We do not know what the problems themselves actually involve and consequently are far from devising a solution when we first face them. The solutions grow out

of the process of living ourselves into the situation; we are thereby enabled to find our bearings and define our duties. The real implications of democracy, therefore, can never be understood until we have tried to make it real in action. Much of the prevailing laxity as to political obligations arises from the fact that we have lacked the whole-hearted confidence in democracy which would enable us to give it a thorough trial. We can not wait simply to be informed what democracy is; it avails us naught to have democracy skilfully deduced from venerated legal formulas by legal specialists. The Greeks long ago demonstrated the inability of pure thought to redeem the spirit of man. We can not pry ourselves loose from the wicked world and lift ourselves bodily into the kingdom by means of logical syllogisms. To prove that a given program is good and wise and self-consistent and ought to be followed is not sufficient. It is not after this wise that men attain salvation. It is only through the actual living out of the program, or better still, through the enlightening effect of sympathetic coöperation with our fellows in the attempt to make democracy real among men that we can ever hope to find out what democracy means and gain the strength of conviction for making it real.

Legal tradition and political representation will always play their part in the attainment of a self-conscious and efficient democracy but they can not be identified with the essence of democracy. For underlying both representative and legalistic conceptions of democracy is the idea that there is in a body of authoritative and indefeasible rights or in the mind of society an inexhaustible source of wisdom and that the function of government is simply to extract this wisdom and make it articulate and serviceable for the masses of men. The difficulty is that in a rapidly developing social order such as that in which we live such a body of fixed and adequate political norms can hardly be said to exist. There are, to be sure, certain set ideas, certain stable organizations of sentiments that arise out of the necessity for certain fixed ways of acting demanded by society. The average man pays

his debts, is properly incensed at brutal crimes, condemns graft and dishonesty, approves acts of heroism, supports his country loyally in a crisis such as the recent war. But these socially valuable and hence relatively fixed political and ethical norms can not be utilized to any very great extent when some larger issue arises, involving new and complex matters of social justice. Here we must have in fact a new organization of ideas and sentiments to fit this new situation. Instead of trying to extract from the average citizen the requisite political wisdom stored away somewhere in his mind we must assist him in the process of making up his mind anew and devoting himself to the solution of the new problem. Perhaps this was in mind when it was remarked, that "Legalism and purely representative government are unsuited to the needs of a thoroughgoing democracy, because their method of organization depends upon popular obedience rather than popular education".[1]

It will be objected at once that this is equivalent to making of democracy a huge experiment. Political obligation is placed at the mercy of ethical relativism. It must be confessed that to a certain extent the criticism is just. But it is difficult to see how we are to separate the idea of risk from responsibility or the idea of relativity from growth. The element of contingency is always present in a genuine moral issue. The moral quality of an act lies in the fact that the risk of the outcome rests with the agent. Risk is, therefore, inseparable from any situation that brings moral discipline and growth. In fact we have already suggested that the moral impotence of the average man in matters dealing with the larger social and national interests is due exactly to the lack of a constraining sense of responsibility. The average American has no vivid sense of political obligation because he has not been made to feel that the future of democracy and the future of his own personal interests are inseparable. Quite the contrary, owing to the disciplinary effect of a law-made democracy, he often acts as though he believed

[1] Croly, *Progressive Democracy*, p. 278.

that his own interests can be best served at times by ignoring political duties.

If we may draw any general conclusion as to the nature of the democracy of the future from the foregoing discussion it is this, that we must cease to look upon democracy as something negative or as a body of rights to be safeguarded rather than utilized. The modern functional and evolutionary point of view has taught us that the state is essentially a dynamic rather than a static entity. It becomes a reality and achieves for itself a place on the page of history by virtue of what it does rather than by virtue of what it is. Just as the reality of individual moral character is the result of the individual's own achievement, so the moral integrity of the state must be achieved, not inherited. It follows, therefore, that a self-conscious democracy, that is, a democracy that clearly grasps its ends, that conscientiously sets about the task of realizing these ends, that reserves for itself the right to change its mind or modify its laws where the better attainment of these ends makes this necessary, that insists, finally, upon being solely responsible for any jeopardizing of national integrity which this change of mind may seem to entail—this is the only form of democracy that can successfully solve the problems of the present and brave the dangers of the future with confidence. With the passing of law-made democracy, will disappear a law-made political conscience. "When I was a child I spake as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things."

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